

WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN TO YOU?

In the dictionary sustainability can be defined as one of two things:

- the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level
- avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance

- Definitions from Oxford Languages

So, what does sustainability mean when it comes to dairy farming in the UK? As an industry, the strategy of dairy producers must include both a sustainable business model, one that is able survive (and thrive), as well as one that is more sustainable for the environment. By uncovering the solutions to sustainability, I believe we will also find the answers to the main challenges that are facing the industry today; the uncertainty in markets and meeting net zero emission targets by 2040.

Sustainability, on both counts, can be achieved through total farm efficiency – making the best use of the resources that you have available to you, meaning effective use of land right through to nutrient efficiency for both stock and crop. Fundamentally all assets of your farm need to be considered, but in essence working with biological systems starts with the soil. After all, healthy soils lead to healthy forage, healthy livestock and ultimately a healthy profit.

The use of well-designed crop rotations not only helps to maintain soil fertility but will reduce erosion and improve soil structure along with organic matter. Efficient use of homegrown forage and fodder also provides a huge potential for increasing farm efficiency, and hence sustainability. With feed accounting for the largest proportion of production costs, these costs can be cut as the amount of bought in feeds is replaced. Homegrown fodder is therefore a sensible approach for many.

For more information about finding the right crops for you, see the latest edition of Kingshay's Forage Costings Report, published in June of this year.

Feed efficiency is not only thinking about homegrown feeds. It has been shown that up to 80% of all nitrogen consumed by cows is excreted, and responsible for much of the ammonia gas and nitrous oxides produced from dairy farming. Feeding lower protein dairy rations and improving rumen efficiency will benefit the environment through lower emissions but will also improve feed margins. With protein often being the most expensive part of the ration, improving protein efficiency can make a significant saving in feed costs.

Improving animal health also provides a potential way of reducing emissions. Livestock in poor health are inherently less efficient, and therefore likely to have higher greenhouse gas emission concentrations.

When considered alongside costs of production too, the costs of disease are well documented – better animal health and welfare generates improved profitability.







In the current uncertainty around foreign competition, access to markets and agricultural support, dairy farmers need to build sustainability: business resilience and environmental stewardship – Kingshay has the tools and technical expertise to help you achieve this on your farm.



MORE DETAILS INSIDE



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-  WELCOME TO EMILY & RICHARD



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SOUTH WEST DAIRY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE UPDATE



In the last newsletter we talked about saturated soils and delayed turnout. Since then we've had one of the driest Aprils on record, followed by another dry six weeks through May and early June, now we're being battered by hail and thunderstorms! Growth on the grazing platform was down to as little as 10Kg DM/Ha a day in early June on some paddocks when we would expect more like 50-70Kg. We are installing soil moisture sensors across the farm. Early data from these shows the importance of achieving good root depth in leys to get at water reserves lower down the soil profile.

We have installed sleepers on the sloping tracks leading to the grazing gates and these are providing a better footing for the cows especially on wetter days (not that we've had many of those recently!).

A new Fullwood footbath has been installed with an automated replenishment system. It is helping to improve foot health alongside regular mobility scoring and work with our vet Dave Jackson and his colleagues from Farm Vets South West.

Kingshay are working with GEA and dairy engineers RMS to extract and analyse more of the data available from our various systems including the Monobox robots to optimise their performance.

Working with Agri-EPI and colleagues in the Vet Partners group, we have had good success in securing funding for research projects under Innovate UK's Science and Technology into Practice funding round although the start date for these has been pushed back by the lockdown. Other projects are also being developed from various funding sources and with industry partners including looking at feeding measures to offset the impact of drought, using video to measure cow health traits, an augmented reality system using gaming technology to provide cowside information, and installation of a LoRaWAN network to enable connection of remote sensors across the farm. More on these and the partners involved as they progress.

At the time of writing there has been a dramatic about-turn in the weather with torrential rain now threatening to cause flooding. It is truly climate change in action.

WOMEN IN DAIRY DAIRY INDUSTRY WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Do you know someone who connects with the industry and the public?

Why not nominate them for the Dairy Industry Woman of the Year Award?

Do they inspire you or others?

Do they share their experience and knowledge?

The winner will be announced live online the evening of the Women in Dairy conference on September 30th.

The award is open to any woman working in the British dairy industry involved in any aspect of the supply chain.



The deadline for nominations is **31 July**.

For nomination forms and more information visit www.womenindairy.co.uk/award

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Kingshay Members get discounted rates! Please contact the team on 01458 851555 to discuss your grass seed needs

PLUS.. a further discount of 5% applied to large orders over 25 acres

RECENT MAILINGS

Twice a month, Kingshay's farmer, consultant and vet members receive Insight publications and a Monthly Checklist and have access to previous ones in the members' area of the website at www.kingshay.com. Here are some highlights from those produced in recent months:

JUNE CHECKLIST

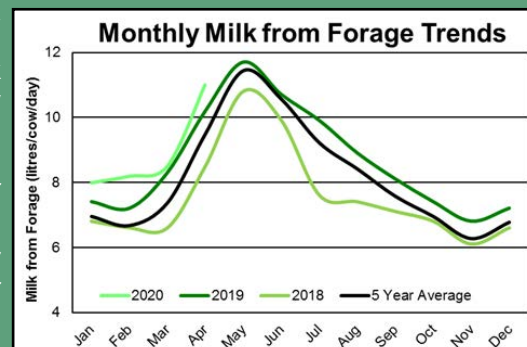
- Dealing with Hot Weather
- Challenges of Mid-Season Grazing
- Funding to support dairy farmers through coronavirus
- Water at Grazing
- Standing Hay
- Key Dates

DAIRY MANAGER UPDATE

What impact has Covid-19 had on your dairy herd financially? If reviewing reports in the media – then quite a bit. But is this echoed in the latest figures for herds using our Dairy Costings service?

Monthly Results	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20
Milk Yield (l/cow/day)	27.3	27.2	27.9
Change on last year	1%	0%	1%
Milk from Forage (l/cow/day)	7.6	8.5	10.9
Change on last year	7%	3%	8%
Milk Price (ppl)	28.4	28.4	27.2
Concentrate Use (kg/cow/day)	9.2	8.8	7.9
All Purch. Feed Costs (ppl)	8.6	8.2	7.2
MOPF (£/cow)	£139	£152	£149
Change on last year	6%	3%	0.5%

As shown in the table to the left, average monthly margins for April 2020 were nearly identical on a £ per cow basis when compared to April last year. Milk prices were down slightly (which was expected) but feed costs were also lower, both in terms of use and cost per tonne, resulting in feed costs averaging 7.2ppl (mostly due to deliveries & availability during lockdown) but milk yields have actually gone up slightly.



As a result, milk from forage figures also look very good, up 8% on last year for April.

When analysed in more detail, 78% of herds received a Milk price of over 25ppl for April. What are your current costs of production? How resilient is your business to any unforeseen market changes?

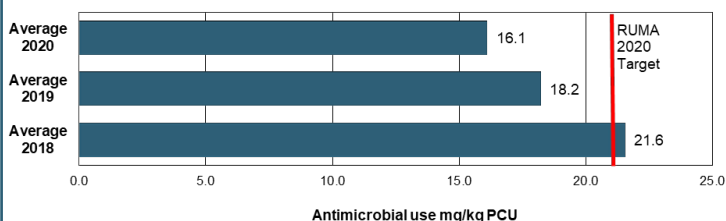
How do your herd's margins compare?
Give the Dairy Manager a team a call on 01458 851555 to discuss this further.

Further monthly & rolling trends are available at www.kingshay.com/dairy-costings/latest-results/

DAIRY COSTINGS FOCUS REPORT SNEAK PEAK

Will farms reach the RUMA antimicrobial 2020 target by the end of this year?

Total Antimicrobial Usage mg/kg PCU - Year end March



Kingshay have been running antimicrobial reports since 2017 and looking at the latest results we have seen a significant decrease in the total antimicrobial used on dairy farms in the last couple of years, from an average of 21.6mg/kg PCU (population corrected unit) in 2018 to 16.1mg/kg for the year ending March 2020. The use of critically important antimicrobials has also dropped dramatically to only 9% of herds using them compared to 82% in 2018. Nevertheless, while the average looks to be on target, the highest 26% of herds were above the RUMA 2020 target with the highest users well above 60 mg/kg PCU.

More in-depth analysis with key trends will be published in our [Dairy Costings Focus Report](#) which is due out mid-July.

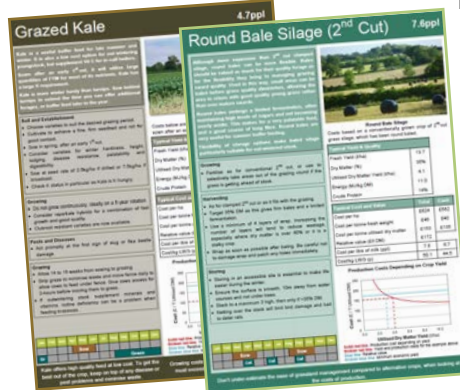
For more information on carrying out an independent review of your Antimicrobial usage just give us a call.

FORAGE COSTINGS REPORT 2020

Published in early June, the eagerly awaited new edition of the **Kingshay Forage Costings Report** provides a detailed insight into the costs of producing forage. Using this report enables the reader to compare the cost of a range of different forages and to see how they measure up on the basis of their relative value, benchmarked against soya and wheat.

With progressive dairy farmers becoming increasingly reliant on evidence-based information to help decision

making on their farm, this useful reference document contains information on how to establish, grow and utilise over 30 different forage crops as well as providing the cost to produce 1-litre of milk or 1kg of liveweight gain from well managed crops.



Recognised across the industry as the primary independent assessment of the true costs of forage production, the Kingshay Forage Costings Report 2020 is available free to Members or can be purchased via the Kingshay Website. (Multiple copy discounts are available, to find out more email contact.us@kingshay.co.uk)

NITROGEN - THE ISSUES

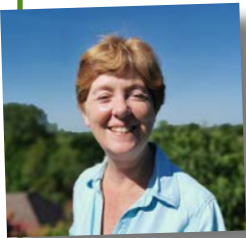
Nitrogen helps greatly to feed the nation, but its effect on air and water quality can be negative and difficult to manage. Applying too much or the wrong type of fertiliser can lead to an increase of Nitrogen losses.

AUTOMATIC HEAT DETECTION

Poor fertility is one of the largest economic problems on dairy farms. Data from Kingshay Dairy Manager puts the losses as a result of poor fertility at £197 per cow, or the equivalent of 2.31p/litre which for an average 150-cow herd equates to £20,250/year.

Feedback on publications will be gratefully received, let Sarah know your thoughts on 01458 851555 or email sarah.bolt@kingshay.co.uk

"IN MY FIELD" WITH DIANA ALLEN



As I write this in early June, we have had weeks of no rain and high temperatures which has been great for 1st cut grass silage and getting maize drilled but it is starting to become concerning. Hopefully by the time the newsletter is published we will be deluged by rain.

From my Malmesbury home office window I have great views over the river valley and enjoy watching a local suckler herd meander across the meadows. On the hot days they spend most of their time by the water trough and in the shade of the hedge and only spread out to graze during the cool of the evening and early morning. Water consumption is even more critical for dairy herds giving far more milk than a suckler cow. Lack of water is the fastest way of dropping milk yield and can also cause low freezing point depression (FPD) in the bulk tank. Lack of water depresses feed intake and thirsty cows can gorge water in the yard before milking which can cause excess water in the milk. Hot cows need more minerals especially sodium. Low sodium can also be a possible causative factor in low FPD. Drinking more is one of the ways cows can mitigate heat stress which can play havoc with fertility at this time of year.

Keep cows cool and increase feed intake by grazing by night and keeping cows under cover during very hot days. Provide rock salt licks and make sure cows have an uninterrupted supply of clean, cool water. Common sense I know but you'd be surprised by the number of empty water troughs I see with cows crowded around them.

Quality Nutrition Management Ltd - diana@qnm.ltd.uk



For more information on how to deal with heat stress refer to Dealing with Hot Weather DAIRY *insight*.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

EMILY



Emily Habberfield joined Kingshay in March as administrative support for the office and for the South West Dairy Development Centre. She is from a farming background and used to work on her parent's goat dairy farm, with her main job being a kid rearer. Emily has a strong interest in agriculture and working her dogs.

RICHARD

We would like to welcome Richard Brown, who has joined Kingshay as a software developer. Over the years Richard has specialised in data, from semi-conductor components to recruitment. He recently moved to the countryside specifically to work in a rural industry. Although not from a farming background, Richard is interested in the role technology can play in farming to improve efficiency, conservation and the environment. When Richard is not working he is usually in the garden - treading a fine line between keeping the wildlife, his landlord and the vegetables happy.



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DAIRY COSTINGS COMING SOON... FOCUS REPORT 2020

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Kingshay DAIRY MANAGER

DUE OUT MID-JULY

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