



# Kingshay



## THE POTENTIAL FOR LIVESTOCK FARMING TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Biodiversity is a hot topic at the moment. A report in 2019 by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reported that globally, the average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20% with changes in land and sea use being a huge driver.

With agriculture accounting for 72% of the land area in the UK, how farmers manage their land has never been more critical. Almost half of all this farmed land is under grass, making livestock farming hugely significant.

Historically, there have been no laws that oblige farmers to maintain biodiversity and there has been little incentive via basic payments, apart from greening measures, to encourage this on farm. Despite this, there are many farmers that are choosing to do more to restore wildlife and increase biodiversity, either off their own backs or via agri-environment schemes.

There are essentially two approaches that can be followed to reduce biodiversity losses on farm; the first of these requires a change of attitude to farm management, essentially farming together with wildlife, creating a more integrated system. The second tactic is to farm most of the land intensively, without change, alongside accepting portions of land to return to a semi-natural state. Which of these approaches suits you and your farm will depend on your farming system and mind-set. Indeed, these need not be mutually exclusive.

The good news is that many studies have shown that increasing biodiversity on farm can also be profitable. Sacrificing low yielding field edges or straightening doglegs in hedgerows can lead to an overall increased yield in arable crops, compensating for taking the area out of production. Grassland is no different, increasing plant diversity

with the use of species rich swards can increase productivity at the same time as improving biodiversity and delivering ecosystem services.

### Dung Beetles

One UK native that has been detrimentally affected by changes in land use and agricultural practices is the humble dung beetle with nearly 50% species threatened! However, farmers and landowners can play a positive role in both protecting and enhancing populations of these amazing ecosystem engineers who can provide benefits by improving pasture and protecting livestock.

Dung beetles reduce pasture fouling by breaking dung down quickly and removing the conditions required for parasites and pest flies to complete their lifecycles. "Dwelling" species literally drink the liquid portion of dung. Some dung beetles, the 'tunnellers' increase nutrient cycling by digging burrows and pulling manure under the soil in which to lay their eggs. These burrows also increase the permeability of soil and reduce the risk of soil erosion and surface run-off. They are a key indicator of a healthy micro-habitat ecosystem – just a small part of the whole farm ecosystem! They are also a vital food source for bats and wading birds.

They are adversely affected by antiparasitic products and so by adopting a diagnostic approach to using these products such as faecal worm egg counting, you can reduce the impact on these vital bugs which are thought to be worth about £350million to the UK livestock industry every year! By making positive changes on farm you can improve your business resilience hand-in-hand with the environment.

*With thanks to Claire Whittle, Veterinary Surgeon, LLM Farm Vets for her assistance with this article.*










## News

Summer 2021



### INSIDE:

-  SWDDC UPDATE
-  ANALYSIS SUITE
-  DAIRY MANAGER UPDATE
-  DAIRY COSTINGS SNEAK PEAK
-  SHOW UPDATE
-  5 MILLION BICYCLES IN BEIJING
-  WELCOME TO MARY-KATE & BILLIE



## Independent Dairy Specialists

## FOLLOWING A TRICKY SPRING WE GET SET FOR SUMMER



This Spring brought its fair share of challenges for us at the SWDDC – and I am sure we were not alone! Low temperatures through April restricted grass growth well into the Spring, however, we prioritised quality over quantity and took first cut silage on the 26th April. It was definitely worth the speculation as much of May was wet, I am not even sure if we had two dry days next to each other. I know this delayed silaging plans for many.

Indeed, this wet weather brought its own trials for the cows grazing. With many paddocks rather wet underfoot, we needed to adapt grazing plans and offer more silage to the higher yielders to maintain intakes. This has

certainly had an effect on the milk yield, but the predominantly autumn calving herd are still averaging 27 litres per cow.

The imported first cut was completed in the welcomed dry weather, along with 2nd cut on the 31st of May. The good news is that grass growth is now back over 80 kg DM/ha a day and the drier conditions are allowing optimal use of grazing.

Various strands of research are currently progressing well, many in collaboration with our partners at Agri-Epi, however we would still welcome the opportunity to discuss future commercial or grant funded projects with like-minded organisations.



## MEASURE AND MONITOR TO MAKE INFORMED MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

At Kingshay we offer a range of analysis services and sampling tools – with discounted prices for members.

Sending samples via **Kingshay's Analysis Service** could not be easier. Kits contain everything you need, from instructions for taking the sample, to containers or bags and also include pre-paid envelopes.

### Why do you need this service?

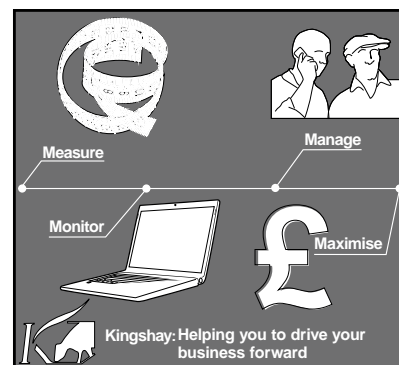
Matching animal's requirements with nutrient supply is key to maximising production. **Analysing feed and forage** for nutritional quality and mineral content is crucial as conditions can be extremely variable year on year as well as from farm to farm.

**Water** can provide both essential and antagonistic constituents for dairy cows. Untreated water i.e. boreholes and water harvested from roofs should be assessed for mineral and microbiological composition when formulating rations or investigating metabolic disorders. Analysis of private water supply is also a requirement of many farm assurance schemes.

Under the Farming Rules for Water introduced in April 2018, farms are required to **soil test** each field at least every 5-years (this means that on average 20% of the farm area should be soil tested each year). Aimed to promote good practice in managing fertilisers and manures, to avoid diffuse pollution, the analysis of Phosphorus,

Potassium, Magnesium and pH will aid fertiliser planning. As a result, input costs may be reduced as nutrient requirements can be more easily matched to nutrient supply as well as increasing plant growth and crop yield.

Kingshay's **Soil Sampling Tool** makes soil sampling quick and easy, without the need for digging holes with a spade. Samples are collected in the funnel and can be easily mixed before boxing the samples for dispatch.



Matching your soils' requirements with nutrient supply is key to maximising production. **Analysing slurry/manure** is an essential, as nutrient value can be extremely variable. Analysing before applications allows you to prepare your fertiliser regime, increase plant growth and yields, as well as managing costs.

**ANALYSIS RESULTS RATHER THAN GUESSWORK SHOULD BE USED TO INFORM ON-FARM DECISIONS.**



### SHOW UPDATE

We will be in attendance at the UK Dairy Day and the Dairy Show. Please come and stop by our stand - we hope to see some familiar (and new) faces!



### DID YOU MISS YOUR SPRING RE-SEED?

Our Autumn Grass Seed mixtures will be available end of July!

**Dairy insight users save £££ plus there is an additional 5% discount for orders over 25 acres.**

*Call the office to discuss your grass seed needs.*



### 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](http://www.kingshay.com). Here are some highlights from those produced in recent months:

### E.COLI MASTITIS

E. coli is one of the primary causes of clinical mastitis in the UK, presenting in various guises from mild cases to severe toxic mastitis that few cows will survive. With that in mind, the emphasis should be on preventing infection by ensuring cows are kept in a clean, dry environment.



## DAIRY MANAGER UPDATE

Kingshay DAIRY MANAGER

Monthly Results	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21
<b>Milk Yield</b> (l/cow/day)	27.6	27.8	28.3
Change on last year	2%	3%	2%
<b>Milk from Forage</b> (l/cow/day)	8.1	9.2	10.7
Change on last year	9%	9%	1%
<b>Milk Price</b> (ppl)	29.2	29.2	29.1
<b>Concentrate Use</b> (kg/cow/day)	9.3	8.9	8.3
<b>All Purch. Feed Costs</b> (ppl)	9.1	8.6	7.9
<b>MOPF</b> (£/cow)	£137	£159	£162
Change on last year	0%	7%	10%

Analysis of herds using Kingshay's dairy costings service show average monthly margins continued to rise through February to April 2021, up 10% on April last year when COVID-19 had a major impact on milk prices & market stability. Margin over purchased feed (MOPF) per cow for April 2021 was helped by strong milk prices and a drop in concentrate use as cows went out to grass. Even though grazing conditions were dry, it has been unusually cold for the time of year.

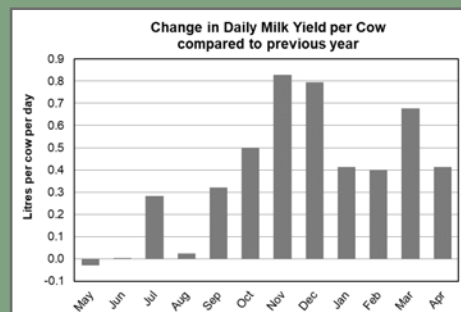
There was also a slight rise in milk from forage

to 10.7 litres/cow/day for Apr 2021, the highest peak in milk from forage on record (since we started the costings service over 20 years ago). Milk yields have also been higher than last year every month since July 2020, see graph for trends.

Concentrate prices rose to average £251/tonne in April 2021, however, all purchased feed costs dropped to 7.9ppl due to a lower concentrate use of 8.3 kg/cow/day.

**Sign up to Dairy Manager today and receive the first 2 months free. Kingshay Members get the Regular package included in their membership.**

Dairy costings figures can be entered online at [www.dairymanager.net](http://www.dairymanager.net). If you do not have your log in details yet, give us a call to be set up.



## DEVELOPMENTS UPDATE

DigiFarm is one of the many projects our growing team of developers have been working on over the last few months.

DigiFarm is a bespoke website and app designed for vet practices that are part of the VetPartners group, alongside Kingshay.

Key features include:

- Data integration
- Milk Recording Reports (Udder Health, Production & Fertility Insight)
- Dairy Health Tracker
- Antimicrobial Reporting
- Document Store



More features are planned in future, including a Biosecurity Survey and Beef Health Tracker reports. If you are a client of a VetPartners practice, then speak to your vet for more details.

Our team of developers have a proven track record of developing "farmer friendly" tools and services, not just for dairy herds.

To find out more about how Kingshay can develop a bespoke website or App for you, email us at [contact.us@kingshay.co.uk](mailto:contact.us@kingshay.co.uk) or give us a call to discuss.

digifarm

## DAIRY COSTINGS FOCUS REPORT 2021 – A SNEAK PEAK AT FERTILITY COSTS

Fertility Status (Year ending...)	This Year (March 2021)	Last Year (March 2020)
Calving interval	397	397
Days to first service	68	71
Services per conception	2.4	2.5
Conception rate	38%	38%
100 day In calf rate	43%	41%
200 day not in calf rate	16%	17%
Infertility culling rate	6.7%	7.9%
<b>Cost of Infertility (ppl)</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>2.34</b>
<b>Cost of Infertility (£/Cow)</b>	<b>£176</b>	<b>£199</b>
<b>Cost of extended calving interval per day</b>	<b>£4.03</b>	<b>£4.09</b>

Analysis of herds using Kingshay's Health Manager service, show that the cost of an extended calving interval dropped slightly by £0.06 per day, due to a small drop in milk price, although concentrate costs rose by £10/tonne.

However, the biggest differences were seen on a pence per litre or £ per cow basis, as this also takes into account the infertility culling rate and its costs. This year this dropped significantly from 7.9% (which was high last year) back down to 6.7% (similar to 2019 figures).

More in-depth analysis of Health & Fertility trends will be published in our FREE Dairy Costings Focus Report which is due out at the end of June.



Kingshay's Health Manager service uses your own herd's performance figures to calculate what infertility is costing your herd.

## JUNE CHECKLIST

- Making the Most of Your Silage Cuts
- Close the Gap - Hedgerow Grants
- Time To Think About Standing Hay
- Undersowing Maize May Help With Harvesting
- Monitoring Your Breeding Season
- Key Dates & Milk Price Trends

## BENCHMARKING SOIL ORGANIC MATTER

Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) has become a bit of a buzz word in the industry. In this dairy insight we look at interpreting your SOC analysis and using the results to benchmark your soil, to help you make informed decisions on how to maintain or improve SOC going forward.

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

## 5 MILLION BICYCLES IN BEIJING

There are 5 million bicycles in Beijing according to the Katie Meluah song...

However, did you know that there are approximately 600 million pigs (sows) in China? A lot of these pigs are still quite extensively farmed (back yard pigs fed on scraps etc.) and of low production. Although due to disease outbreaks, such as African Swine flu, more and more pigs are now being housed in modern commercial pig units.

"What is the significance of this to a UK dairy or beef farmer?", I hear you ask.

A modern sow will have 2.2 to 2.4 litters of piglets/year. If you feed the sow and all the progeny to finishing weights, they will consume approximately 4 tonnes of pig feed. This feed consists mainly of soya and cereals (wheat/barley/maize).

So.....600 million sows x 4t = 2.6 Billion tonnes of feed!!!

This is a huge amount of feed being bought by China and leaving less for the rest of the world including UK farmers. Putting a squeeze on the supply, will continue to put pressure on the global raw material markets and therefore UK livestock feed costs. The future trajectory of Chinese pork production is unlikely to change and will mean, it is essential we make our dairy or beef businesses as resilient as possible.

Despite this Spring's best efforts to de-rail us, the focus must be maintained on producing an abundance of top-quality home-grown feed and forage. We must harness the best that dairy and beef genetics can offer along with optimising animal housing and environment.



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### TEAM NEWBIES

#### MARY-KATE MAHONY

Mary-Kate joined the Dairy Manager team as Farm Services Specialist in April and has been busy answering queries and ensuring smooth running on the costings service. You may have already had acquaintance with Mary-Kate over the phone or by email!

Mary-Kate brings with her a vast amount of farming experience, ranging from rearing her own calves, pigs and breeding sheep & most recently working as a milk recorder.

Outside of work, Mary-Kate has 3 young boys & 2 dogs that keep her busy. When she has any spare time from a busy family life, she enjoys a bit gardening & baking.



#### BILLIE WAKEMAN



Billie joined the team in May as a Data Projects Coordinator to help with the many on-going projects at Kingshay.

Although not from a farming background, she has been involved with various data development projects for the last six years across different industries so is used to learning quickly on the job! Billie is very much

looking forward to discovering more about farming as she progresses working in the agricultural industry.

Billie's hobbies include teaching fitness classes and designing and sewing clothing.

### PORK ROLLS & CHEESECAKE!

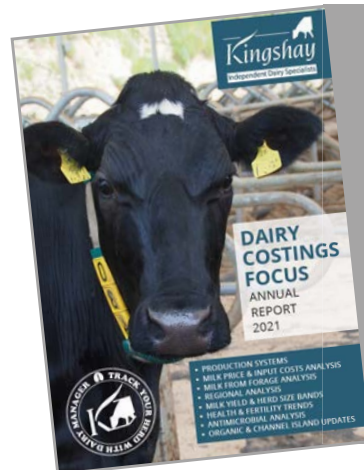
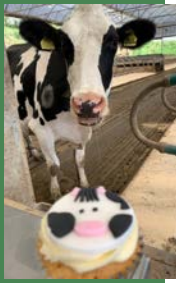


A couple of weeks ago the whole team came together for a team meeting and a farm tour at the South West Dairy Development Centre.

It was brilliant for everyone to catch up and

for some people, it was meeting one another for the first time. It's fair to say that none of us went hungry with pork & turkey rolls provided along with 3 delicious cheesecakes!

We hope it's not too long until we can all be back together working in the office.

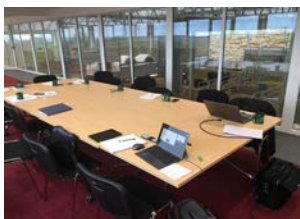


### DAIRY COSTINGS FOCUS REPORT 2021

#### DUE OUT AT THE END OF JUNE

If you would like your **FREE** copy please contact us and we will add you to the pre-order list.

### MEETING ROOM HIRE



With a prolonged year of restrictions (some still on-going) we are all in the same boat of missing that face-to-face interaction.

We are pleased to confirm that our meeting room at the South West Dairy Development Centre is back open for hire! Whether you are wanting a venue for your training sessions, a team building day or an important meeting - we can accommodate!

Please email [contact.us@kingshay.co.uk](mailto:contact.us@kingshay.co.uk) to secure your booking.

### CONTACT US:

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