



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORMS, SOIL & CROPS

As this year we are looking to demonstrate the relationship between soil, worms and crops in action, so we have constructed a field cross section, complete with soil layers, worms, and topped with our very own herbal ley.

Worms and other soil organisms carry out the essential work of turning organic matter into plant fertiliser within the soil – which we’ve been observing from applying muck onto the surface and witnessing the worms at work. The worms are performing bioturbation: the mixing of plant residues into soils by biotic activity. We can now see horizontal and vertical burrows created as the earthworms perform this task that is so crucial for our crop above.

Earthworms help reverse compaction with their burrow formation. This provides the following crop benefits:

1. Increased oxygen availability for soil microbes to break down organic matter and release nutrients for crop roots.
2. Increased soil water storage capacity, giving longer drought tolerance for the crop.
3. Increased root penetration, so the plants will have faster nutrient uptake and further drought tolerance.
4. Better drainage, decreasing the potential for waterlogging.

A study (Bender and van der Heijden, 2014) found that nitrogen leaching was nearly 25% lower from soils with an abundance of soil life when compared to soils with poor levels of soil organisms. This study shows that biologically healthy soils enable a greater proportion of applied nitrogen to be utilised for crop growth, and also reduce environmental impact. **It pays to look after our soil microbiota.**

Worms aside, we have also enjoyed observing the growth patterns of the different plant species in our herbal ley. Our chicory plant was unsurprisingly the first to hit the bottom of the container with its roots, demonstrating what makes it so drought tolerant. The plantain’s roots followed not long after, with the white clover’s roots lagging behind. All plants have received a “grazing” with scissors to encourage some lateral growth and close up those unwanted gaps in our sward.

Come and see our worms in action at our stand at the Down to Earth event at Grosvenor Farms in Cheshire on Wednesday 3rd July.

Follow us on social media and look out for **#WormyWednesday** for more interesting facts!



Written by Emma Puddy,
Farm Services Specialist



IN THIS EDITION...

- The Relationship between Worms, Soils & Crops
- Dairy Manager Update

- In My Field
- NMR Gold Cup Award
- Recent Publications
- Shows & Events



Written by Felicity Gale,
Farm Services Specialist

Dairy Manager Update

The latest monthly results of herds using Kingshay's dairy costings service are showing a continuing increase in milk prices month on month.

April 2024 averaged 38.7 pence per litre, slightly lower than March due to seasonality kicking in.

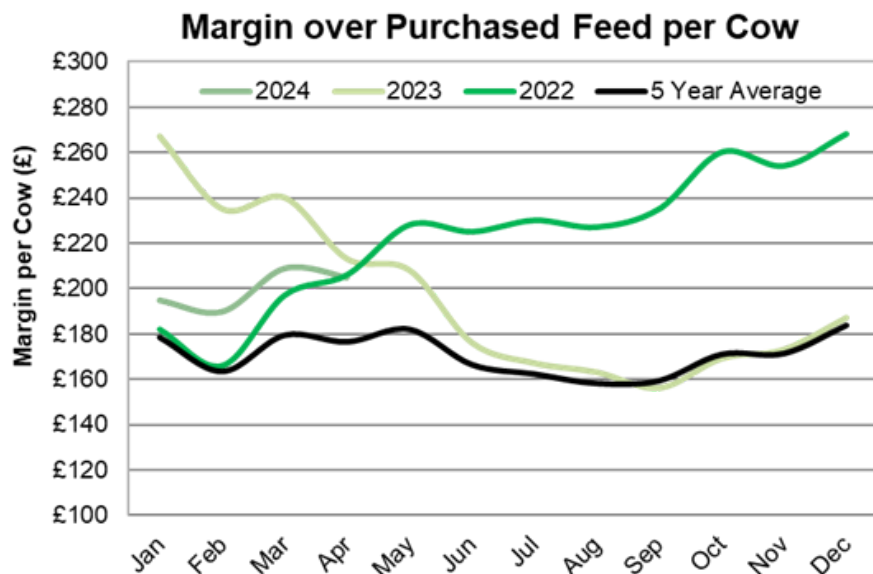
Milk yields for the period show a 1% increase on the previous year, but we are not seeing the usual spring flush for this time of year. Headline milk prices are rising month-on-month as the unprecedented wet weather is affecting milk production and supply to milk processors.

Monthly Results	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24
Milk Yield (l/cow/day) Change on last year	↔ 27.4 0%	↑ 27.5 1%	↑ 27.7 1%
Milk from Forage (l/cow/day) Change on last year	↓ 7.8 -1%	↓ 8.0 -5%	↓ 8.8 -8%
Milk Price (ppl)	38.6	39.0	38.7
Concentrate Use (kg/cow/day)	9.5	9.3	9.0
All Purch. Feed Costs (ppl)	12.2	12.1	11.5
MOPF (£/cow) Change on last year	↓ £187 -20%	↓ £206 -14%	↓ £204 -3%

Source: Kingshay Dairy Manager

Whilst milk prices have been increasing, concentrate prices per tonne are decreasing in price, currently 14% lower at £322/tonne compared to Apr 2023. Total concentrate use increased by 3% to 8.9kg/cow/day in Apr 2024, and all purchased feed cost/litre dropped by 9% to 11.5ppl.

Overall, the margin over purchased feed per cow was 3% lower in April 2024 at £204/cow, compared to £210/cow in April 2023, but similar to margins seen in April 2022.



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DAIRY COSTINGS FOCUS REPORT 2024

KEY TRENDS IN PERFORMANCE, FEED EFFICIENCY PLUS HEALTH & FERTILITY

****OUT MID JULY****

COMING SOON

IN THIS REPORT:

- PRODUCTION SYSTEMS
- MILK PRICE & INPUT COSTS ANALYSIS
- MILK FROM FORAGE ANALYSIS
- REGIONAL ANALYSIS
- MILK YIELD & HERD SIZE BANDS
- MILKING FREQUENCY
- HEALTH & FERTILITY TRENDS
- HEIFER TRENDS
- ORGANIC UPDATES
- CHANNEL ISLAND & CROSSBRED UPDATES



Written by Kathryn Rowland,
Senior Farm Services Manager

"IN MY OFFICE"

At this time of year we are always very busy in the Dairy Manager team, analysing figures for the March year end herd performance and getting out and about on farm visits. For the 13th edition of our Dairy Costings Focus Report (due to be published mid July), we have included fully validated data from 1,068 conventional herds and 83 organic herds.

We have been getting a lot of enquiries about adding a milk bonus or 13th payment to the monthly dairy costings website. This can currently be added and spread over multiple months using the "Other Options/Milk Bonus" button or give us a call and we can add it for you. All relevant months will be updated and margins recalculated with the additional payment.

We have been busy signing up First Milk herds onto our Level 3 Health Manager service. If you are a First Milk member or currently use our dairy costings service through your nutritionist or consultant, then give us a call to set you up or link the health module to your account.

Our IT development team are busy working on our new Dairy Manager website, with a launch date planned for the Autumn - more details on this to follow.

Emma Puddy submitted a poster for the British Mastitis Conference titled "Trends in Dairy Herd Antimicrobial Usage: From the Lowest Users to the Highest". A copy of this can be downloaded on our website.





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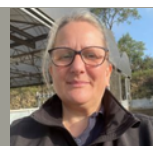


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Written by Sarah Bolt,
Technical Knowledge Exchange Manager



The 2024 Stride dairy mobility survey was commissioned to build a picture of dairy cow mobility and how it is managed across the UK. The aim was to better understand the situation on farm and opportunities for improvement.

Some of the key findings from the 359 respondents were:

- Compromised mobility and foot health is still a significant issue for UK dairy herds and will be impacting profitability.
- There appears to be an acceptance of current levels of poor mobility.
- The true cost of poor foot health may be understated as the condition is not clearly recorded and the savings are not easily calculated.
- Digital dermatitis and sole ulcers are of greatest concern.
- There is variable uptake on all the main preventative measures.

Learnings from the survey: The industry must be more proactive in communicating the importance of better foot health and mobility. Remove barriers to engagement. Clearer and more effective allocation of responsibilities across the whole farm team. Develop holistic prevention programmes. Encourage adoption of new technologies to support diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

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BEST FOOT FORWARD MOBILITY AND FOOT HEALTH WORKSHOPS

Discussion and Lunch of BBQ/hog roast.

Stride is hosting a series of free farm workshops across the UK to share the latest thinking on cost-effective reduction of foot health issues and compromised mobility. All meetings start at 10:00am and will finish by 2:00pm.

- **9th July** SW Dairy Development Centre, BA4 6SS
- **10th July** Twose Farms Ltd, SA34 OXE
- **11th July** Lydney Park Farm Ltd, GL15 6DN
- **16th July** JE Chamberlain & Son, Hollyhurst Farm, DE6 2FD
- **17th July** AS Black Farmers, Norrieston Farm, FK8 3QE
- **18th July** Ling Dairies Ltd, CA4 OJH.

Scan the QR code
to register to
attend one of the
farm workshops



KINGSHAY NEWS

Kingshay Team Visit NMR/RABDF Gold Cup Winners

Kingshay's Sarah Bolt, Kathryn Rowland and Felicity Gale visited Bisterne Farms on Wednesday 22nd May, winners of the 2023 NMR/RABDF Gold Cup.

Bisterne Farms in Ringwood, Hampshire were one of the first farms to receive this award with a low input, grass-based herd. They use Kingshay's dairy costings service through their feed supplier Crediton Milling.

Estate owner Hallam Mills and contract farmer George Brown milk 600 crossbred cows, their focus is to produce milk from grazing.

Currently they produce 3,730 litres of milk from forage, their target is to reach 4,000 litres.

There were three talk stations, held by three speakers that contribute to the running of the farm. Oliver Hall from Andersons explained the contract farming agreements (CFA) at Bisterne Farms. Piers Badnell from LIC discussed the importance of choosing the right cow for the right system. Synergy Farm vets gave an insight into their responsibility for many of the decisions made on the farm regarding animal health. Chris Walkland shared positive news regarding milk prices reaching over 40ppl.



STAFF NEWS



A huge congratulations to Christina Ford and her partner Tom, who welcomed Reggie John in April.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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

Milk from Forage



Establishing White Clover



Preparing for EA Inspections



Undersowing Maize



WE ARE ATTENDING



Wednesday 3rd July
Grosvenor Farms, Aldford Hall
Farm Chester Road, Aldford,
Chester, CH3 6HJ



Wednesday 11th September
Telford International Centre,
Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4JH



Thursday 18th July
Sandy Park Way, Exeter,
EX2 7NN

The Dairy Show 2024

Wednesday 2nd October
The Showground, Shepton
Mallet, BA4 6QN

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