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Agrileader - The Leader

11 December 2025

Business insights and advice to help you stay ahead of the curve

Welcome to the winter edition of The Leader, your go-to source for practical ideas and inspiration on leadership in agriculture.

In this edition, we highlight just a few of the brilliant presentations and scholars who spoke at this year's [Nuffield Farming Conference](#) in November. Every year, Nuffield Farming Scholars travel the globe to uncover and share farming practices, mindsets, technologies and business models that we in the UK can tap into to stay competitive and resilient.

You'll also find details about our new CEO – Helen Herniman – and our exciting new podcast – The AG Show – below.

Leading Self: Doing more with less – learning from the small to teach the big

Jamie Stokes, an arable farmer from Cambridgeshire, began his Nuffield journey with a practical problem: how to make the most of unprofitable corners of a high-input arable farm.

Instead of accepting limitations, he reframed the challenge as an opportunity to learn from small-scale producers around the world. Through conversations with over 100 businesses, Jamie discovered that success often stems from mindset, embracing the natural environment, prioritising flavour and simplifying communication with consumers.



His journey is a powerful reminder that progress begins with the willingness to think differently.

[Read Jamie Stokes' Nuffield report](#)

Leading People: Neurodiversity in agriculture

Liz Haines' project – neurodiversity in agriculture – offered a thought-provoking look at how our sector can better recognise and support the strengths of neurodivergent individuals.

With estimates suggesting that up to 36% of the agricultural workforce may be neurodivergent, her work highlights practical steps you can take to create clearer communication, more flexible roles and stronger, more inclusive teams.



You may also know Liz from her Farmers Weekly '[Levelling the Field](#)' campaign, championing fairness and amplifying under-represented voices in farming. Together, her research and advocacy underline how embracing different ways of thinking can help address labour shortages and strengthen the resilience of farm businesses.

[Explore the findings from Liz's project](#)

Leading Business: Enhancing the resilience of the UK dairy sector

Climate volatility is no longer a distant threat – it's here, and UK dairy farms must adapt.

For her project, Hattie McFadzean, an AHDB-sponsored scholar, explored how farmers around the world are responding to extreme weather and what practical lessons can strengthen UK dairy businesses.



From herd management to investments in infrastructure, her research shows that resilience requires planning, flexibility and a shift in mindset. Hattie reminds us that adaptation isn't just about reacting to crises; it's about embedding resilience into business strategy.

[Read Hattie's report](#), and better still, join our [Talking Leaders broadcast on 18 December](#) to hear all about her travels and key highlights.

All the presentations from the conference are available on [Nuffield Farming's YouTube channel](#) – make sure to check them out!

Helen Herniman appointed CEO of AHDB

We've appointed Helen Herniman as our new Chief Executive and Accounting Officer from 5 January 2026.

Helen is a chartered accountant with several years' executive experience, leading organisations in a variety of sectors through growth, turnaround and transformation.

[Read more about the appointment](#)

Listen, watch, read

The AG Show – Your favourite new farming podcast

Listen to our new podcast for lively conversations, debate and fun as we welcome farmers, industry insiders and experts to break down everything from livestock and crops to tech, trade and sustainability.

No jargon overload – just honest chats, smart insights and stories that reflect what it's really like working in agriculture today.

[Listen to the latest episode](#)



Emily Norton on leadership and global learning

As a former Nuffield Farming Scholar (2019), our Chair, Emily Norton, returned to the 2025 Nuffield Farming Conference to champion the power of leadership and global learning in shaping the future of UK agriculture.

[Watch Emily's short summary video](#)

Leadership Bitesize Guide

Strong leadership is key to running a successful farm business. The new Leadership Bitesize Guide, created by RASE and Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, is packed with practical tips for managing teams, building rapport, improving negotiation skills and boosting self-awareness.

Whether you're just starting out or already leading others, this guide will help you grow.

[Download the guide](#)

[**Get in touch**](#)



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