AHDB

AUTUMN 2025

ALL THINGS DAIRY

YOUR AHDB DAIRY UPDATE

Putting in the miles to meet global demand

Higher genetic merit delivers real-life gains

Milk marketing MAKES ITS MARK

Turning heads and shifting attitudes towards British dairy

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Contents

AHDB

Produced for you by:

AHDB Dairy
Middlemarch Business Park
Siskin Parkway East
Coventry
CV3 4PE

T 024 7669 2051
E comms@ahdb.org.uk
W ahdb.org.uk

If you no longer wish to receive this information, please email us at **comms@ahdb.org.uk**

AHDB is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain. We equip the industry with easy to use, practical know-how which they can apply straight away to make better decisions and improve their performance. For further information, please visit **ahdb.org.uk**

Regional **ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

Our field-based Engagement team is your first point of contact for support and enquiries, providing you with direct access to technical expertise and guidance.

Whether you need help or direction, or just want to stay informed about local events, reach out to your local engagement manager.

For contact details of our specialist teams, including market information, research and genetics, visit **ahdb.org.uk/meet-the-team-dairy**

Scotland
Doreen Anderson
doreen.anderson@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07901 116454

Mid and South Wales
Jamie McCoy
jamie.mccoy@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07823 790440

North, North West and North Wales
James Hague
james.hague@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07792 289386

East and West Midlands
Jess White
jess.white@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07776 599778

South East
Emily Udall
emily.udall@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07591 444338

South West
Thom Washbourne
thom.washbourne@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07443 254093

Devon and Cornwall
Laura Awdry
laura.awdry@ahdb.org.uk
M: 07391 415018

WELCOME

Paul Flanagan,
Dairy Sector Director

As we head into the second half of 2025, the weather continues to throw challenges our way. Prolonged dry conditions have put pressure on forage and feed stocks as we prepare for winter, while the emergence of bluetongue earlier in the summer has reminded us how quickly disease threats can develop.

Despite this, we've seen record levels of milk production and a farmgate price that has remained steady. In a volatile world, that stability is welcome news and a testament to the professionalism and resilience of the sector as it faces the ever-evolving demands of dairy farming.

At AHDB, our top three strategic priorities are marketing, exports and the environment.

Our marketing campaigns are helping shift perceptions. Milk Every Moment, which targets students and young adults, got a great response in its first year. I saw the impact and enthusiasm first-hand at the Rugby Milk Championship Finals back in April. Alongside Let's Eat Balanced, these campaigns are creating long-term connections with the public by highlighting the positives of British dairy.

Our Export team continues to go the extra mile, quite literally. In the first six months of the year, they covered over a staggering 130,000 km supporting UK dairy exporters at 14 global trade events. British dairy's international reputation has never been stronger, and our commitment to showcasing world-class produce remains at the heart of our work.

On the environmental front, our pilot baselining project is progressing well, bringing us closer to assessing environmental impact at farm level across Great Britain. You'll also find an update on our role in the Defra-funded UK Dairy Carbon Network inside this issue.

Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll find inspiring case studies from our Strategic Dairy Farms, updates on our education programme and details of our new Healthy Herds campaign, designed to put herd health at the centre of profitable, future-ready dairy farming.

If you haven't already, I'd also encourage you to book a place at one of our Johne's: Profit through prevention meetings taking place across GB this October.

As always, thank you for your commitment to this great industry. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Milk marketing **MAKES ITS MARK**

Our latest marketing campaigns are turning heads and shifting public attitudes towards British dairy

From student sports halls to streaming platforms, our activity is helping redefine how people see milk as a nutritious part of an active and balanced lifestyle.

Reaching millions with Let's Eat Balanced

Let's Eat Balanced set out to remind the public that British dairy and red meat not only taste great but are also an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. At a time when consumers are more curious than ever about where their food comes from, we celebrated both the nutritional benefits and dedication of farmers working in harmony with nature.

Running throughout March, the THIS & THAT series captured attention across ITVX, Channel 4, Sky, YouTube and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

More than 50 million adults were exposed to the campaign, and 12 million on-pack stickers reinforced the messaging in supermarkets. Consumer perceptions that dairy is part of a balanced diet rose by 2% and engagement among young adults is on the rise. Positive word-of-mouth about meat and dairy among this key group increased by 15% compared to August 2023.

Dairy farmers like Emma Furnival and Anna Bowen helped extend the campaign's reach even further by sharing short videos online about their work. These personal stories gave authenticity to the wider message and strengthened the link between nutritious food and the people behind it.

Milk Every Moment scores big

Milk is now officially the original sports drink, with our Milk Every Moment campaign serving up some impressive results in its first year.

Delivering over 16 million digital impressions and reaching nearly 9 million individuals, the campaign has also sparked more than 248,000 engagements on TikTok and Instagram.

Launched in partnership with British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), it positions milk as a timeless staple in the fridge – not just as a beverage but a nutritional powerhouse. It's affordable, natural and packed with nutrients like protein, calcium and vitamin B12.

The campaign featured at seven major student events across the UK and worked with BUCS student ambassadors to create engaging, high-energy content. Games like 'Milk Pong' and 'Catch a Cow' brought students into the fold while driving home a powerful message: milk supports recovery, performance and wellbeing.

A follow-up survey showed that three in four student athletes now recognise that milk can aid their sports

performance, a significant success in changing perceptions within a key audience group.

With BUCS operating across 165 institutions and engaging over 500,000 students, Milk Every Moment has plenty of room to grow. Its relatable tone and energy-packed content make it perfectly suited to Gen Z values around health, authenticity and affordability.

MilkGoals: Where sport, confidence and nutrition meet

This summer, we kicked off MilkGoals to coincide with the 2025 UEFA Women's Euro football championships. The new social-media-led campaign taps into the power of women's football to inspire the next generation to be active, confident and embrace healthy eating.

Fronted by Euro 2022 champion Nikita Parris, MilkGoals brings relatable role models into the conversation. In June, Nikita returned to her Liverpool roots to film with Girls2Goalz, a grassroots academy founded by Liverpool Feds player Mia Parry.

A new Milk in Sport factsheet, aimed at parents, offers clear advice on when and how milk can support active young people.

As Nikita puts it:

> "British milk is an absolute staple. It's affordable, naturally rich in protein and vitamin B12, and fits into my diet every day"

Find out more about our marketing work at **ahdb.org.uk/marketing**

Putting in the miles to meet **GLOBAL DEMAND** for British dairy

The global reputation for quality British dairy produce has continued to grow this year, with our International Trade Development team delivering its biggest half-year amount of activity for the sector, as Lucy Randolph explains.

In the first six months of 2025, the team clocked up more than 130,000 km supporting a total of 36 UK companies at 14 events across the world as part of its global drive to promote world-class British dairy produce.

Supported by representatives on the ground in the USA, the Middle East and Asia, we have been working with industry and government to ensure British dairy has taken centre stage everywhere, from San Francisco to Singapore.

In June, we took part in the International Dairy Deli and Bakery Association (IDDBA) event in New Orleans, with four UK dairy exporters on stand and supporting a further six at the show. June also saw the team take part in Food and Hotel Seoul, South Korea, for the first time with three export businesses. We ran a webinar in conjunction with the British Embassy and the agri-food attaché to equip exporters with the tools needed to complete the registration process and gain a foothold in the market.

June's events capped a busy first half of the year, which began with our annual Quality Cheese from Britain event at the Foundation Room at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas, showcasing products from 12 different exporters.

In February, the team headed to Gulfood in Dubai with our biggest-ever stand. This was preceded by an AHDB-run online Halal Dairy Exports webinar ahead of the event, covering what halal dairy products mean, the registration process and routes to market in the Middle East.

April saw the largest-ever contingent of dairy exporters at FHA Asia in Singapore, with five co-exhibitors on stand, one of them joining us for the first time.

May marked International Trade Month, where AHDB and UK export businesses showcased dairy produce at an array of key industry events. These included the Saudi Food Show, Lulu Qatar British Food Week promotion, HOFEX in Hong Kong, the Cheese and Libation Expo in San Diego and a first appearance at the Thaifex show in Bangkok.

Find out more about our exports work at **ahdb.org.uk/exports**

For further information, contact:
Lucy Randolph
Head of International Trade Development
lucy.randlolph@ahdb.org.uk

VIEW FROM RACHAEL SPEED

AHDB Senior International Trade Development Manager

UK dairy exports performed well in 2024 against a backdrop of challenging trading conditions. The first half of 2025 has been incredibly busy as we've aimed to maintain and build on that momentum.

Working collaboratively with industry and government – and in no small part down to the additional support of our in-market representatives, Victor Willis, Karen Liao and Adil Khan – we've championed our world-class dairy produce across the globe and delivered a huge amount of activity for our dairy sector.

Our international trade development activity, including participation in international trade shows, outward missions and the work of our representatives in-market, is one of the cornerstones of AHDB's work.

Our core UK-based team and in-market representatives will continue to work on behalf of our dairy levy payers to help maximise opportunities around the world, with more in-store retail promotions planned and an enhanced presence at tradeshows for our dairy levy payers.

We look forward to delivering more of this activity throughout 2025. In October, we will be joined by exporters from our dairy sector at Anuga in Cologne, this year's biggest global trade show, which will attract industry buyers and key decision-makers from around the world.

The month will also see us host our inaugural AHDB Dairy Export Conference in London, bringing exporters together to discuss the issues and opportunities presented in our fast-evolving global trading environment.

This activity on the ground, coupled with the consumer and international market analysis from ur Market Intelligence team, helps equip our exporters with insight and practical support to succeed.

We've enjoyed a busy and positive first half of 2025 and will continue to work with industry and government to unlock the success of British agriculture and ensure our world-class dairy produce thrives on the global stage.

Inspiring the **NEXT GENERATION** at on-farm events

This year, we partnered with LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) to deliver three exciting and immersive Focus on Farming events. These events give primary and secondary school students a unique opportunity to experience agriculture first-hand and engage with industry – Elsa Healey tells us more.

In February, 120 secondary students took part in a dynamic event at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire, designed to bring them closer to the heart of British farming and sustainable food production. Through hands-on activities and conversations with farmers and industry professionals, they explored key topics, including animal husbandry, arable farming, biodiversity and the latest agricultural technologies.

A dedicated market hall featured both a careers hub and producer showcase, offering students valuable insight into the diverse opportunities available across the agri-food sector, with a particular emphasis on sustainability.

In June, over 90 primary school pupils visited Birkdale Farm, a sheep and arable farm in North Yorkshire. Throughout the day, they engaged in interactive stations and guided walks, discovering how food is produced and meeting the people behind it.

Later that month, the Lawton family welcomed 120 secondary students for another action-packed day to their dairy farm in Wiltshire. The event was oversubscribed, reflecting growing interest from schools in connecting students with real-world farming experiences.

The students saw first-hand how modern agriculture combines cutting-edge technology with environmental stewardship. From precision farming to biodiversity management, they explored how innovation is shaping sustainable food production. Activities throughout the day also highlighted the vital role of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in agriculture.

Kathryn Catto, North Farm, Wiltshire, said: “My parents and the team at North Farm were thrilled to see the engagement of all the students in wanting to learn more about where their food comes from. We are committed in maintaining an ongoing link with the next generation as an important aspect of our role as farmers in providing a sustainable environment for food production. We also see it important to give the students a concept of what roles there are for them should they wish to be a part of food production in the future.”

Carl Edwards, LEAF Director of Education and Public Engagement, added: “These events are a vital way of helping young people connect with farming, understand sustainable food production and explore future career paths. Thanks to the incredible support from host farmers and industry partners, we’ve been able to give students and teachers an inspiring glimpse into the world of agriculture.”

These events reaffirm our commitment to educating and inspiring the next generation, helping young people understand where their food comes from and the vital role that farming plays in feeding the nation. Through initiatives like these, we aim to secure a strong future for UK agriculture and foster a deeper appreciation of the agricultural industry.

Find out more at **ahdb.org.uk/education**

For further information, contact:

Elsa Healey
Senior Education Manager
elsa.healey@ahdb.org.uk

Laying the groundwork for **LOW-CARBON DAIRY FARMING**

Our Environment Baselining Pilot continues to move forward and get us closer to our goal of assessing the environmental impact of farms across GB, says Chris Gooderham.

Led by AHDB and supported by QMS, the pilot is collecting detailed assessments of carbon found in the soil, trees and hedges. It will also give farmers a better understanding of their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through a carbon audit and, together, help make better decisions and prepare for the future.

The results will provide an independent and robust evidence base to support the whole industry on a journey to net zero and improved environmental sustainability.

Key activities are now well under way, with high-resolution LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) scanning of the pilot farms now largely complete. The LiDAR produces three-dimensional points to create what is known as a point cloud. These point clouds are then analysed and interpreted to provide three-dimensional maps of the landscape and create detailed models of the land's surface and vegetation.

This allows us to estimate carbon stored in above- and below-ground biomass and the identification of landscape features, such as areas at risk of water run-off, and will inform each farm's environmental report.

Soil sampling has already been carried out on a large number of farms and goes beyond surface-level testing. Most changes in carbon levels happen in the top layers of soil, but samples are taken at four different depths to understand where and how much carbon is being stored and how that may change with different management.

These metrics will provide valuable insight into soil carbon, and combined with the above-ground LiDAR data, they will give each farm a more complete picture of its carbon stocks.

Every participating producer will receive support from a dedicated consultant to carry out a carbon audit in years one, three and five, with action plans developed in years one and

three. The plans will draw on wider data from the soil sampling and LiDAR scans, when available, to help producers understand their farm's carbon footprint and identify practical steps to reduce emissions.

By capturing detailed data, the project aims to demonstrate the environmental value of British agriculture, both domestically and internationally. It will help the industry showcase its role in delivering public goods and services, such as carbon stocks, reducing GHG emissions and enhanced biodiversity, while supporting the transition to more sustainable and profitable farming practices.

North West Wales baselining farm

Tegid and Hannah Williams, who run a 300-cow crossbred herd near Pwllheli in North West Wales, joined the pilot to get a clearer picture of their farm's environmental performance.

Their family has been dairying at Cefn Gwyn for 15 years, starting as a run-off block for youngstock and silage and converting to a full dairy in 2020 after being offered more land.

The couple, who farm in partnership with Tegid's family, now focus on improving dairy breeding, soil health and making the most of home-grown forage to boost profitability.

"We have a mix of land types, woodland and ponds, and I just wanted a proper baseline. Our soils vary across the blocks, and we want to know if we're managing them in the best way. Our carbon figures go up and down each time we work them out for our milk buyer, so looking at it across a five-year period should give us a better understanding of our carbon."

One area where they are currently working on their carbon is through sowing clover, which has always been incorporated into their reseeding plans. They were encouraged to plant more clover over the last two springs after attending our Curious About Clover event last year.

ENVIRONMENT BASELINING PILOT FACTS

- **Pioneering pilot project to assess the environmental impact of farms across GB**
- **Five-year project taking place with 170 farms across GB**
- **Involving dairy, beef, lamb, pork, cereals and oilseeds producers**
- **Covering around 36,000 ha of GB farmland, including woodland and moorland**
- **Providing a more accurate picture of British agriculture's position and progress towards net zero**

Follow the pilot's progress at **ahdb.org.uk/baselining**

For further information, contact:
Chris Gooderham
Environment Director
chris.gooderham@ahdb.org.uk

How one Yorkshire farm is winning **THE MASTITIS BATTLE**

Howard and Tom Pattison at Willow Tree Farm, a high-yielding Yorkshire dairy, have been working to reduce mastitis while optimising resource use and maintaining milk production. Alan McFadzean tells us how.

FARM FACTS

- Joined the Strategic Dairy Farm network in summer 2022
- 280-cow, fully housed herd calving all-year-round
- Average yield of 13,500 L per cow (4.2% butterfat, 3.4% protein)
- 162 ha growing a mixture of grass, winter wheat and maize

Over the past year, the farm has seen fewer clinical cases, changes in how mastitis appears in the herd and significant cost savings through relatively small changes to their facilities.

The Pattisons have long prioritised disease control. Recently, mastitis has become their main focus – a challenge exacerbated by the herd's high productivity. With support from James Breen, veterinary adviser at Map of Ag, and Mark Glover, the farm's long-time vet, they've successfully reduced mastitis cases by 40%.

James began working with Willow Tree in 2022 to help this low cell count herd reduce environmental mastitis. They initially focused on a few key changes: regrouping cows, increasing space and modifying bedding.

One major adjustment involved merging two milking groups by opening four sheds and removing dividing gates to form a single, larger group. They also repurposed an unused space near the parlour into an extended collecting yard, improving cow flow and creating room for a new automated footbath, which cows now use twice daily. This also increased loafing space per cow.

They switched to a larger-grained bedding sand to prevent compaction. Bacteriology tests showed improved or comparable results, and the new sand eliminated the need for full bed dig-outs, saving time and money.

Living space and ventilation in focus

"Seasonal variation is becoming more noticeable, with higher clinical cases in summer," said James. "One of the most important factors in reducing infection pressure is optimising cow space, particularly in collecting and dispersal areas. Expanding these zones improves welfare and lowers infection risk."

James also emphasised the importance of 'living space', the area beyond feeding and lying zones, linking it to longer lying times and improved yields.

This year, the Pattisons also focused on ventilation. They noticed cows bunching up in certain sheds despite adequate airspace. Working with consultant Jamie Robertson, they explored airflow patterns, suspecting a link between poor ventilation, pathogen build-up and mastitis risk.

Howard explained, "We made some small changes over the last year. In our south-facing shed, we removed every other bay of boarding on the outside and moved it to the inside. This gave us six-inch gaps between the wooden slats to allow better airflow."

Savings from reduced cases

One year after first tackling their mastitis issue, Willow Tree reviewed their progress with James and Mark. "We've seen a drop in clinical mastitis cases," said Tom. "The cases we do see now tend to be more severe, so we're exploring vaccination to reduce severity and frequency."

Cost has been a major motivator as each mastitis case can cost £250–£300 in treatment, yield losses and discarded milk. In October 2020, Willow Tree recorded 199 cases. By October 2024, that number had dropped to 131. That 68-case difference could equate to savings of £17,000–£20,400 annually.

TOP TIPS

James Breen's top tips for reducing the number of mastitis infections in your herd:

- Decide on appropriate treatment and act quickly
- Always assess the need for antibiotic use and don't shy away from using it if the cow needs it
- Keep good cow records with reasonably frequent measurements to identify recurring infections
- Be open to making some changes. Adapt your farm to overcome increasing infection rates

For further information, contact:
Alan McFadzean
Knowledge Exchange Manager
alan.mcfadzean@ahdb.org.uk

Scanning for healthy heifers: **TACKLING EARLY SIGNS OF PNEUMONIA**

At Rough Grounds Farm in Derbyshire, efforts to detect and treat pneumonia and potential lung damage in calves have led to a healthier milking herd and improved weight gains. Jess White tells us more.

Between spring 2023 and autumn 2024, the farm saw an average daily live weight gain (DLWG) increase to 0.84 kg/day, with 40 out of 59 heifers exceeding the 0.8 kg/day benchmark.

Healthy cows start as healthy calves, and building a strong foundation begins with preventing and treating pneumonia early. The longer lung damage persists, the harder it is to treat effectively. Pneumonia remains one of the most significant diseases affecting calves, costing the UK cattle industry an estimated £50m a year (AHDB).

Farmers Graham, Justine and Jess Worsey, along with equity share milker Dan Jones, have worked closely with their vet, Beckie Harrison from Peakfield Vets, to reduce long-term lung damage in calves. Over the last few years, they've seen fewer cases of lung damage as calves transition into the milking herd.

"Since 2023, we've been on a mission to rear even healthier, stronger heifers through proactive management, improved nutrition and early disease detection," said Jess. The team embraced data tracking, lung scanning and tailored veterinary protocols, transforming calf performance and laying the groundwork for long-term herd productivity.

"We've also focused on colostrum quality testing, monitoring DLWG, assessing the environment and using thoracic ultrasound (TUS) scanning to detect lung damage – a key sign of pneumonia," Jess explained.

Managing the risk of pneumonia

"Lung scanning can assess the severity of lung damage in clinical cases at first treatment, monitor progress and detect subclinical pneumonia," said vet Beckie Harrison. She added that it helps evaluate the effectiveness of preventive strategies, determine treatment needs and guide future buying decisions.

Scanning is used both individually, to identify and treat calves in the subclinical stage, and at a group level, to assess overall disease trends and the impact of management changes.

"We've found that the best time to scan is around six to seven weeks of age," said Beckie, noting that early detection improves treatment outcomes significantly.

To address increased pneumonia risk in autumn-born calves, the team introduced early intranasal vaccines and two injectable pneumonia vaccines before weaning in 2024. “We also adjusted the environment – switching to two daily 4 L milk feeds and timing bedding and trough-filling during milk feeding to reduce cross-suckling,” said Justine.

Early findings

Initial results from spring 2023 showed that 38% of calves had lung consolidation requiring treatment. Average DLWG was 0.67 kg/day, and only 9 of 47 heifers hit the 0.8 kg/day target. Notably, three heifers with the worst lung scores had the lowest growth rates – with no visible clinical signs – highlighting the value of lung scanning for detecting hidden disease.

By spring 2024, average DLWG rose to 0.84 kg/day, with 40 of 59 heifers exceeding target weight gain. Autumn-born calves, the first group to receive the full vaccine protocol, reached an average of 0.85 kg/day, with 28 of 35 meeting the target.

“The percentage of heifers with lung consolidation dropped to 0% in spring 2024, rose slightly to 11% in autumn and then to 33% in spring 2025, largely due to poor ventilation and overcrowding,” said Beckie. Of the 21 heifers treated in March 2025, 14 increased their daily live weight gain, five maintained and only two declined slightly – again, with no visible signs of illness. Importantly, no cases progressed to severe disease.

By spring 2025, average DLWG increased again to 0.86 kg/day, with 50 of 64 heifers exceeding the 0.8 kg/day target. Even more impressively, clinical pneumonia cases dropped significantly, with none recorded over Christmas 2024 – a frequent problem in previous years. No antibiotics higher than category D had been used in over a year.

Looking ahead

The Rough Grounds team plans to continue monitoring older heifer weights to ensure consistent DLWG after weaning. They’re also working to smooth the transition to grazing and maintain a strong focus on disease prevention.

“We’re really happy with the results so far and are hopeful we can keep reducing pneumonia cases through our vaccination plan and housing improvements,” said Jess.

The farm’s success is from attention to detail, consistent routines and data-driven decisions. Their experience shows that small, purposeful changes can deliver big results in health, welfare and future milk production.

Find out more about Rough Grounds Farm at **ahdb.org.uk/strategic-dairy-farms**

For further information, contact:

Jess White
Dairy Knowledge Exchange Manager
jess.white@ahdb.org.uk

FARM FACTS

- Strategic Dairy Farm since November 2023
- Split block-calving system
- Mixed herd of 260 Jersey, Shorthorn, Friesian and cross-bred cows
- Yields of 6,500 L per cow, with 4,500 L from forage
- 161 ha, of which 100 ha is grazed by the cows

Higher genetic merit **DELIVERS REAL-LIFE GAINS**

A new analysis of black-and-white dairy herds has confirmed that choosing animals with higher genetic merit continues to translate into real financial gains for dairy producers, says Marco Winters.

Based on data from 249 herds comprising over 66,000 cows, the latest study conducted by Promar reveals that each point difference in Profitable Lifetime Index (£PLI) now equates to a £2.09 change in margin per cow per year. This is a notable increase from the previous finding of £1.58 per point, further reinforcing the economic importance of genetics in herd performance and profitability.

The herds were grouped by average £PLI per cow, and those in the top 25% for genetic merit consistently outperformed the rest. The top group had an average £PLI of 229, compared with 141 for the average group and -30 for the bottom 25%. This genetic advantage played out across a range of performance and financial measures.

On average, the herds with the highest £PLI achieved an annual milk yield of 11,149 L per cow, significantly above the 9,816 L in the average group and 7,960 L in the bottom group. This increase in production was matched by higher milk income per cow: £4,569 in the top group, compared with £4,026 and £3,274 in the average and bottom groups, respectively.

Although the herds with the highest £PLI used more feed at 4.38 tonnes (t) of concentrate per cow versus 3.73 t in the average herds, their higher production meant they achieved better efficiency, with a feed rate of 0.393 kg/L. Even with higher feed costs (£1,620/cow/year), the margin over purchased feed was substantially greater at £2,949, compared to £2,635 in average herds and £2,274 in the bottom group.

Other costs and income streams, such as calf value and veterinary spend, followed similar patterns. High £PLI herds generated more calf income and had slightly higher spending on vet and AI services, though these costs remained proportionate to their improved performance. Importantly, the net replacement cost (factoring in the difference between cull and replacement animal value) was only marginally higher in the top group, while direct forage costs remained broadly similar across all groups.

The concept of a 'genetically influenced margin', a figure that isolates the profit differences likely driven by genetic factors, was particularly revealing. In the top PLI herds, this margin stood at £2,664 per cow per year, compared with £2,350 for the average group and £2,042 for the bottom quartile. The £314 difference between the top and average groups demonstrates the powerful role genetics can play in overall profitability.

A breakdown of what drives the gap between high and average PLI herds reveals that milk yield alone contributes over £500 to the advantage. While slightly higher concentrate costs and veterinary spend reduced this figure somewhat, the overall result remains clearly in favour of investing in better genetics.

> “The case for prioritising genetics in farm strategies has never been stronger”

This latest research underscores the value of £PLI as a tool for making breeding decisions. It suggests that producers who select bulls with high £PLI, particularly when paired with genomic selection for identifying the best females to breed from, stand to benefit significantly in the long term.

For farmers who are milk recording, see how your herd compares using our Herd Genetic Report for a snapshot of your herd’s current average £PLI.

The findings offer compelling evidence that genetic improvement is not just a long-term goal but a contributor to a farm’s day-to-day bottom line. With £2.09 of additional margin per cow available for every point increase in £PLI, the case for prioritising genetics in farm strategies has never been stronger.

For further information, contact:

Marco Winters
Head of Animal Genetics
marco.winters@ahdb.org.uk

Genetics website gets a major upgrade

We’ve launched an improved dairy genetics website, designed to make it easier for you to access and use your herd genetic data.

The upgraded digital platform delivers a more intuitive experience, giving you the insights and tools needed to make confident, data-driven breeding decisions.

This relaunch is part of our continued commitment to supporting better-informed breeding decisions to drive productivity and efficiency on your farm.

What’s new?

- Streamlined navigation with all content now housed in one dedicated genetics site
- Enhanced mobile compatibility for access on the go
- Advanced filtering and trait selection tools to search bulls or breeding females with greater precision
- Updated and expanded content to help you make the most of genetic information
- Improved data control, including the ability to manage or revoke third-party access

Whether you’re selecting the right bull, reviewing herd performance or planning your long-term breeding strategy, the new dairy genetics website is built to support your goals, every step of the way.

Explore the new website **breedingdairy.ahdb.org.uk**

PREPARING your herd **FOR AUTUMN**

As the busy summer season winds down, autumn presents a good opportunity for dairy farmers to take stock of herd health and performance, explains Dr Miranda Poulson.

One priority for many during this time will be reviewing and updating the farm's herd health plan and annual National Johne's Management Plan (NJMP).

The NJMP is a vital part of responsible herd management, requiring farmers to work with their BCVA-accredited Johne's veterinary adviser (BAJVA) to assess and mitigate the risk of Johne's disease – a chronic, incurable condition that affects the gut of cattle, leading to reduced milk yields, fertility issues and early culling.

Find your nearest BAJVA adviser **actionjohnesuk.org/bajva**

While the visible signs of Johne's often don't appear until the disease is advanced, the hidden costs can be significant. That's why risk management and ongoing prevention are critical.

Autumn is often the time to review progress against last year's plans, update the farm's risk assessment and agree a strategy for the year ahead. For many, this will form part of routine Red Tractor assurance visits, which require documentation of a reviewed and up-to-date NJMP.

Phase III of the NJMP, which launched earlier this year, introduced several important changes to strengthen disease control across the industry. One of the most significant updates is the requirement for all herds to obtain an average test value (ATV) for Johne's disease. This ATV provides a snapshot of disease levels within the herd and allows progress to be monitored over time.

To generate an ATV, farmers must now complete a 60-cow random screen as a minimum testing requirement, replacing the previously accepted 30-cow targeted screen. This move aims to provide a more accurate picture of infection within the herd and drive more effective, data-led decisions on farm.

Vets and advisers are encouraging farmers to use this planning process not as a tick-box exercise but as a chance to make real gains in herd health. Farms that consistently follow Johne's control measures – such as testing and managing positive cows separately, improved calf hygiene and managing colostrum sources – see better long-term results.

The autumn herd review is a valuable opportunity to assess what's working and what needs adjusting. A proactive approach to herd planning is more than best practice; it's essential for business resilience. Taking time now to review, plan and act could make all the difference in the year ahead

For further information, contact:

Miranda Poulson
Animal Health and Welfare Scientist
miranda.poulson@ahdb.org.uk

Healthy Herds

JOHNE'S MANAGEMENT – PROFIT THROUGH PREVENTION

Join us at one of our GB-wide meetings designed for your whole farm team to equip you with the tools, knowledge and confidence to take the next step in Johne's disease control.

As the industry moves into a new phase of Johne's disease management, testing requirements are changing and disease management protocols are progressing.

Whether you have an existing plan or are struggling to know where to start, these events will offer practical guidance, share real-farm experience and give you expert advice to help refine your Johne's plan, reduce disease prevalence and improve overall herd health.

Any steps taken to tackle Johne's have a cascade impact in control of other diseases in your herd too, so attending is highly recommended even if you don't consider Johne's a challenge to your herd.

You'll hear directly from the host farmer and an expert vet, who will share their experience managing Johne's – whether that's maintaining a low-risk herd or tackling current challenges.

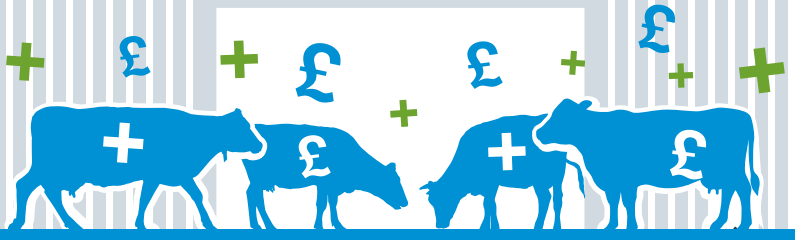
The meetings will cover:

- Making the most of milk recording data
- Johne's control through better calf hygiene
- Managing cows during calving according to their infection status
- Critical biosecurity principles: biocontainment and bioexclusion
- Fine-tuning your team approach to on-farm behaviour change

We're also offering attendees who milk record the opportunity to sign up for a follow-on benchmarking workshop, which will allow you to understand your own herd data in relation to others, give you follow-up support and help you frame the conversation with your own vet to bolster your farm's bespoke Johne's action plan.

If you're ready to go further in your Johne's control journey, this is a great opportunity to build on what you've learned and learn from other proactive farmers.

See the enclosed leaflet for dates and locations or visit **ahdb.org.uk/healthy-herds**



Farms to lead **EMISSIONS REDUCTION EFFORTS**

Over 50 dairy farms from across the UK have been appointed to join the newly launched initiative to implement and assess practical, farm-ready solutions for reducing GHG emissions. Teaghan Tayler tells us more.

UK DAIRY Carbon Network

The UK Dairy Carbon Network is a pioneering initiative that puts practical, science-backed GHG reduction strategies into action on commercial farms.

Led by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and funded by Defra, the project brings together a UK-wide consortium of leading research institutions and industry organisations, including AHDB, with one clear mission: to show that reducing emissions can go hand in hand with improving farm efficiency and productivity.

The farms are grouped into four regional networks: South and South West England/Wales, Cumbria and South West Scotland, North West England and Northern Ireland.

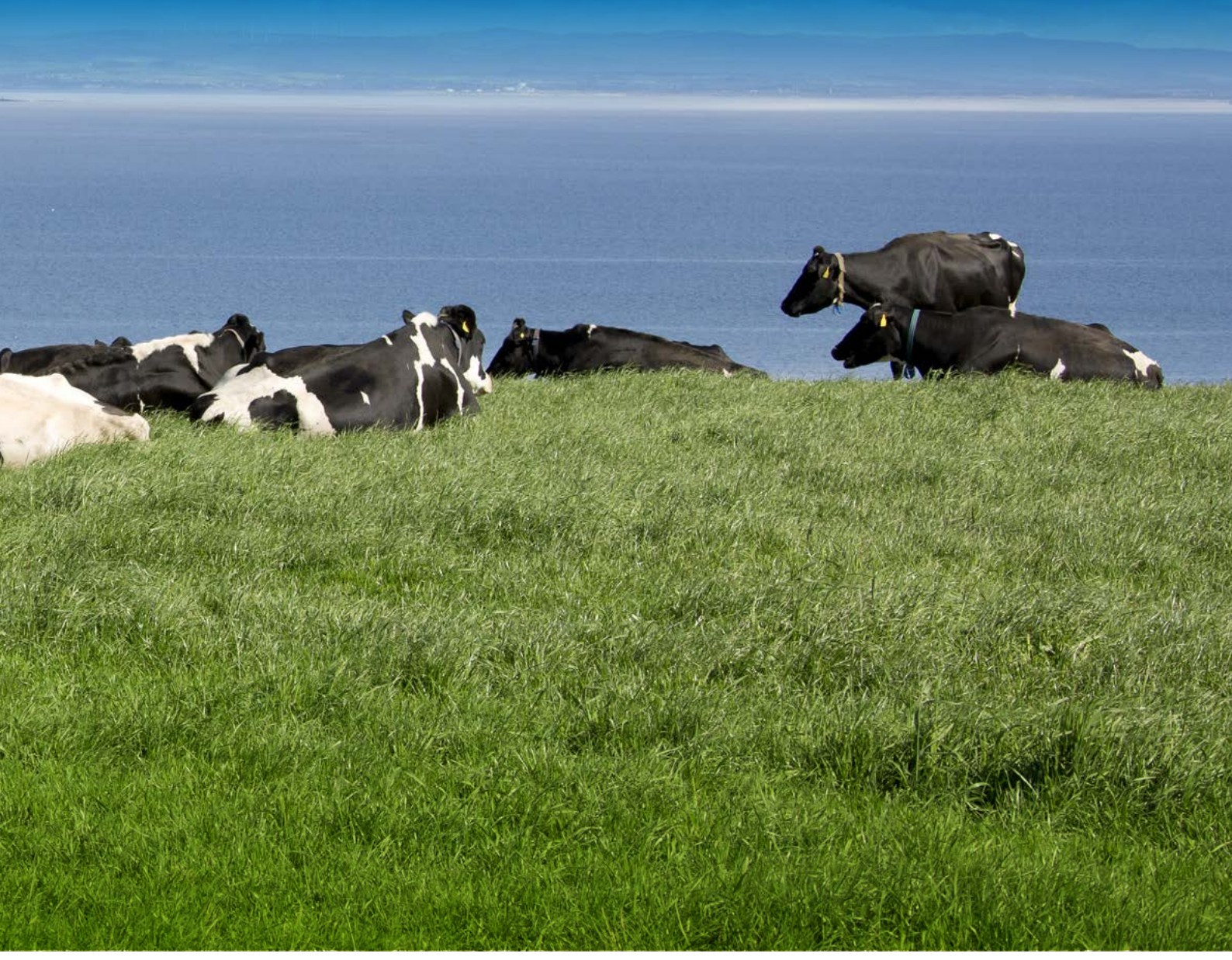
Each participating farm will receive personalised support through a tailored implementation plan, developed to suit their system, local climate and geography.

Over the course of the three-year programme, farms will implement and assess a range of approaches proven to reduce emissions, selected from five priority areas identified by the project.

These include using tools like AHDB's EnviroCow index and genomic testing that allow farmers to select animals that produce more milk with lower methane emissions. Alongside this, improving the quality and utilisation of home-grown forage reduces the need for imported feeds and cuts emissions per litre of milk produced.

Feeding strategies will also play a vital role. By working with nutritionists to fine-tune rations, farmers can reduce both methane emissions and nitrogen losses. Healthier animals contribute to a lower carbon footprint, with structured plans to tackle issues like mastitis, lameness and calf mortality supporting better productivity and fewer wasted resources.

At the field level, farmers can reduce fertiliser emissions by integrating clover and other legumes to fix nitrogen naturally and replace synthetic fertilisers with protected urea. Enhanced nutrient planning will ensure nutrients are used more efficiently, reducing nitrous oxide emissions and building soil health.



Farm liaison officers in each region will work closely with the appointed farms, providing hands-on support and facilitating knowledge-sharing opportunities through open days, farm walks and peer-to-peer events. These activities are designed to accelerate learning, helping farmers across the UK see the benefits of GHG-reducing practices in action.

The officers began collecting on-farm data over the summer with the aim of building a partial carbon budget for each participating farm, focusing on the key areas that influence a farm's carbon footprint. This will help identify where emissions are coming from, track changes over time and highlight opportunities to reduce them without compromising productivity.

At its core, the project is about practical understanding. By gathering accurate data now, it will be able to measure improvements later and build a solid evidence base for the wider industry. It also lays the groundwork for shared learning, enabling us to identify and promote low-emission practices and innovations that are working on real farms.

This data driven approach enables the farm liaison officers to work closely with participating farmers, pinpointing the areas of their system that have the greatest potential for improvement and matching those with the practical tools, support and options available within the project.

As more data comes in, the project will start sharing insights on what's working. The more we understand what's happening at ground level, the better placed we are to support meaningful, measurable progress across all the farms.

By demonstrating practical solutions on real farms, the UK Dairy Carbon Network aims to break down barriers to change and fast-track the adoption of methods that reduce GHG emissions while supporting the long-term resilience and profitability of the UK dairy industry.

To find out more, visit **ukdairycarbonnetwork.co.uk**

For further information, contact:

Teaghan Tayler
Head of GB Farm Networks
teaghan.tayler@ahdb.org.uk

Small shifts for **BIG GAINS**

Running a modern dairy business demands more than managing cows. It requires clear thinking, effective leadership and the ability to adapt in a fast-changing environment, according to Mark Campbell.

While major breakthroughs or big investments often grab the headlines, it's the small, consistent changes that quietly drive sustainable progress on farm.

More farmers are shifting focus from doing more to doing better. At this year's AgriLeader Forum, these ideas were brought to life through expert speakers and peer discussions. Six months on, they're still making a difference on farms across the country.

Here are three practical principles you can use to strengthen your leadership, teams and businesses.

1. Start small, stay consistent

Success doesn't need to begin with a big shift. Research from both business and sport shows that micro-habits – small actions done regularly – build stronger foundations than occasional bursts of effort.

Simple actions like getting up 10 minutes earlier to review priorities, jotting down what's gone well each day or scheduling a short weekly check-in with the team can have a lasting impact. Over time, these habits improve clarity, reduce firefighting and create space for longer-term thinking.

Positive habits coach Kat Thorne introduced this concept, encouraging farmers to focus on "tiny shifts that build momentum". Her advice: forget the overhaul – what matters is showing up consistently and building small wins.

2. Lead through others

Dairy farmers often wear multiple hats – from employer and parent to problem-solver and fixer. But effective leadership isn't about doing everything yourself. It's about creating the conditions for others to step up and succeed.

The concept of 'followship' – where leadership is earned through trust, not control – is increasingly relevant on family farms and small teams. That might look like:

- Involving staff in planning or decision making
- Offering regular feedback and encouragement
- Delegating responsibilities with clear expectations

At the forum, People and Leadership specialist Gemma Krasucka, who works with elite sports teams, shared how culture and communication shape performance. Her takeaway: "Great leaders create space for others to succeed – and that multiplies their impact."

On farm, this can lead to better team morale, smoother day-to-day operations and greater business confidence overall.

3. Work smarter, not harder

In farming, long hours and hard graft are part of the culture. But many performance coaches now warn against the idea that more is always better. In fact, striving for 80% consistency often delivers more sustainable results than chasing 100% perfection.

This means knowing where your time is most valuable and where better systems or support can lighten the load. Practical steps include:

- Automating or streamlining repetitive jobs
- Setting realistic working hours to allow rest and recovery
- Creating boundaries around evenings and weekends where possible

High-performance coach Anna Mosley said encouraging farmers to view rest not as a weakness but as a strategic resource. Taking care of energy levels enables sharper thinking, better decision making and long-term resilience.

Real-world impact

Mike Morley, from the North, was one of the many delegates who embraced the challenge and reflected on how much has changed in just a few months.

"The journey has been good. I've recently taken a plunge on a business venture I've been putting off, alongside expanding a diversified business with my wife.

I've also just employed an 18-year-old on the farm, and changing my mindset to train and support him has been challenging but rewarding.

Arable still feels tough at the moment, but the cattle side is doing well, and we're making enough to maintain our lifestyle – so no complaints. I'm already looking forward to next year's forum. The timing of it always does me so much good."

Reflecting on progress

Mike identified ambition, family, pride and adapting to the ever-changing cost of living as his motivations. He highlighted lifestyle and innovation as core goals, with challenges like mindset shifts, staff development and economic unpredictability lying ahead.

But it's the mindset shift that stands out. As Mike said, "Accept what you can't change" – a timely reminder that resilience, reflection and community are often the most powerful tools in a farmer's toolkit.

Looking ahead

For Mike, the past six months have been about realigning goals, trying new approaches and staying grounded. Whether it's through diversification, hiring, re-evaluating leadership style or simply taking better care of wellbeing, progress is being made in steady, intentional steps.

AgriLeader continues to support farmers on this journey. It's not a finish line; it's a starting point. A catalyst for change, a place to connect and a reminder that even small shifts can bring big gains.

Find out more at **ahdb.org.uk/agrileader**

For further information, contact:
Mark Campbell
Knowledge Exchange Manager (AgriLeader)
mark.campbell@ahdb.org.uk

NEWS & UPDATES

YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR BTB

If you're looking for evidence-based bovine tuberculosis information, TBhub is your go-to website. Hosted by AHDB and backed by over 15 organisations, including Defra, APHA, NFU, BCVA and the TB Advisory Service, it brings together practical advice, tools and support in one place.

Whether you're managing a current TB breakdown or looking to reduce the risk of one, TBhub has the resources you need.

What you'll find on TBhub:

- **Support and guidance:** Find out what to do during a breakdown, how to access help from organisations like RABI and the Farming Community Network, and where to get expert advice from the TB Advisory Service, free to eligible farmers in England
- **Prevention and planning:** Learn how to lower your risk with practical information on biosecurity, trading, badger-proofing and disinfection. Use the ibTB map to understand the local TB picture and inform purchasing decisions
- **Policy and resources:** Access clear explanations of TB rules, including testing, inconclusive reactors, AFUs, LFUs and vaccination. The site also offers downloadable factsheets, FAQs and species-specific advice for cattle, badgers, deer, camelids and others
- **Latest data:** Explore the interactive dashboard, using Defra statistics to track incidents, animal numbers and trends

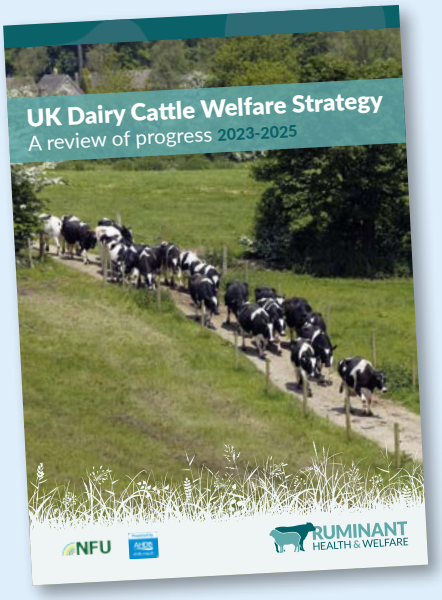
Scan here or visit tbhub.co.uk to find out more

EMPOWER YOUR FARM AND ASSESS BLUETONGUE RISK WITH YOUR VET

The Battle Bluetongue campaign, led by AHDB and Ruminant Health & Welfare (RH&W) in collaboration with industry.

The campaign provides a comprehensive range of practical resources to support farmers and vets in any decision to vaccinate. Tools include the Bluetongue Movements Checker, Vaccine Comparison Tables, and Vaccination Finance Calculators for sheep, beef and dairy and are available on the AHDB and RH&W websites.

UK DAIRY CATTLE WELFARE PROGRESS REPORT



In 2023, Ruminant Health and Welfare launched an ambitious, industry backed strategy to demonstrate evidence-based progress in six key areas of cow welfare.

Two years on, an interim report draws on available data to demonstrate cow health and welfare while celebrating diverse industry initiatives, scientific developments, and opportunities available for farmers. Notable achievements include the launch of the GB Dairy Cow Lameness Manifesto, evident progress in reducing the prevalence of Johne's Disease and genetic developments.

Whilst recognising achievements to date, continued industry collaboration is essential to sustain momentum towards 2028.

The full report is available on the Ruminant Health and Welfare website.