

AUTUMN 2025

RUMINANT NEWS

AHDB

AT THE HEART OF THE BEEF & LAMB INDUSTRY

**Standing up for
British farming**

**Biggest red meat
inward trade mission**

Unlocking the **VALUE OF LAMB**

Discover how AHDB is spotlighting
British lamb and its producers

Funded by
your levy

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Produced for you by:

AHDB
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

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WELCOME

Emily Norton, AHDB Chair

We are coming towards the end of another challenging year for British agriculture, with input costs, policy issues and the weather all playing their part. But uncertain times also breed opportunity, and I am proud to have the chance to help this sector grow and thrive in my new role as the chair of AHDB.

As levy payers, you are our priority, and this organisation is here to play a key role in supporting you to farm with confidence and with a secure future in mind. One of the first tasks I have had in my new role is to oversee the appointment of a new CEO and Beef & Lamb sector director. The calibre of these appointments will shape how effective AHDB can be for the next 10 years.

The sector is a fundamental part of agriculture and one which I am proud to be able to champion. In this edition of Ruminant News, you can read more about how the levy supports your needs, including safeguarding the British sheep meat market in France, inspiring the next generation at on-farm events and my ambitions for AHDB to be unafraid of progress and committed to delivery for you.



STANDING UP FOR BRITISH FARMING

Emily Norton succeeded Nicholas Saphir as the Chair of AHDB on 1 June. Find out more about Emily's passion for farming and what she hopes to bring to the role over the next three years.

Why did you want to be the chair of AHDB?

I grew up on a mixed arable and dairy farm, so saw first-hand both the fragility and the resilience of farming. That experience instilled in me a deep respect for farmers and the mindset it takes to get the job done well. But it also gave me a bit of fire in the belly – I won't sit back and watch our industry get swamped by problems. We must fight for the opportunities.

I'm clear that we need to move beyond defensive conversations and actually drive progress. AHDB gives levy payers the evidence, the markets and the confidence they need to make this industry a growth sector again. That's why I wanted this job – to help turn potential into reality.

What type of leader are you?

Opinionated, yes. But also considered – I will always take time to consult and listen. I know that farmers don't have time for waffle – they need clarity and delivery. Once we make a decision, I'll make sure we follow through.

What are your priorities for the first six months?

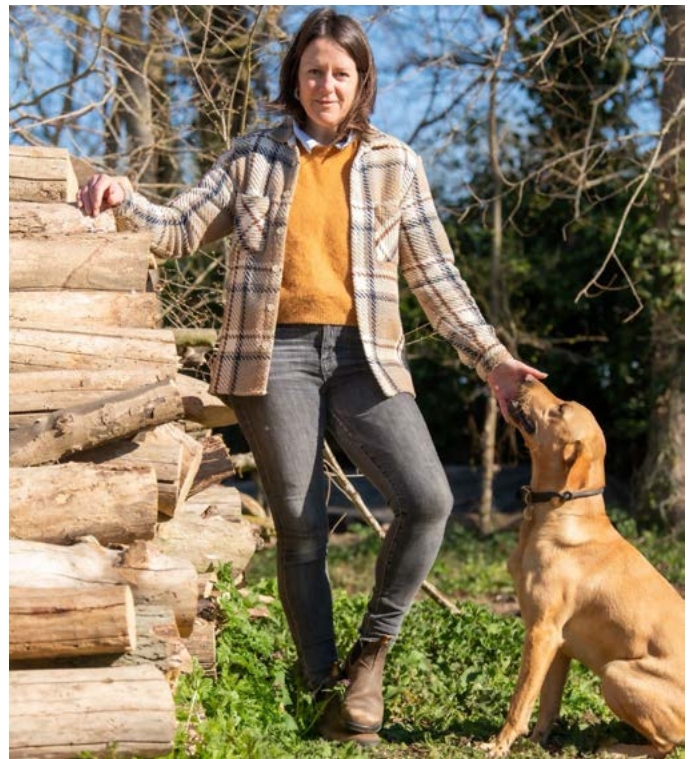
Maintaining positive momentum in AHDB is absolutely number one. We have seen what can go wrong if levy payers don't support collaboration, so we must constantly reinforce their belief in AHDB through visible impact. That means being transparent about what we do and making the tough calls where necessary.

How important is the beef and lamb sector to AHDB?

The beef and lamb sector isn't just important – it's fundamental. I joke that livestock are the gateway drug into farming, allowing folk from all walks of life a way into working with landscapes and providing food for local communities. But the red meat sector is, of course, also of huge economic and environmental importance, and it is under constant scrutiny. That means we need to be unapologetic about its value and much bolder in telling its story.

What do you think are the biggest challenges the beef and lamb sector faces, and what can AHDB do to help?

Input costs are biting, imports are rising, and on policy issues such as methane we are too often reactive and defensive.



“The beef and lamb sector isn't just important – it's fundamental.”

Add disease risks like bluetongue into the mix, and it's clear farmers are carrying a heavy load.

Our job is to back farmers with world-class market analysis, open export doors and deliver insight and evidence that actually shifts the dial. Just as importantly, our Animal Health & Welfare team provides the technical backbone the industry needs to manage threats like BTV.

How can levy payers get in touch with you?

Out and about, I want levy payers to grab me, challenge me, tell me what's working and what isn't. And if they prefer, they can always reach me on email at emily.norton@ahdb.org.uk

I believe in the power of people – and the only way to build that is through conversation.



BIGGEST red meat inward **TRADE MISSION**

Global appetite for British red meat grows as buyers from across the world head to the UK for the full pasture-to-plate experience.

In June, 28 buyers from the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Middle East took part in AHDB's biggest ever inward mission for the red meat sector.

The four-day event included visits to farms and processors in the West Country to learn more about production of world-class British beef, lamb and pork. It culminated with a 'meet the buyer' event and gala dinner at Butchers' Hall in London, attended by exporters and UK government representatives.

A panel session preceded the 'meet the buyer' event and gala dinner, where guests heard from AHDB market analysts and its International Trade Development team about quality UK red meat produce, market access and the potential for future trade arrangements.

Jonathan Eckley, AHDB International Trade Development Director, said: "It provided the ideal platform for buyers from across the world to gain further insight at source into how we produce our world-class red meat. The mission provided the full pasture-to-plate experience, with delegates joining us at the gala dinner to taste this quality produce for themselves."

Department for Business and Trade spokesman Tim Barraclough said: "AHDB continues to deliver key export support for the sector, ensuring appropriate access for key

categories in growth markets. It is fantastic to see an international delegation of buyers coming to the UK to engage directly with our world-class sector."

Last year (2024), UK red meat exports were worth £1.77 billion, driven by the performance of beef shipments to Europe and further afield. The value of beef, lamb and pig meat exports in 2024 increased 3.3% on year-earlier levels, highlighting the global appetite for British red meat.

Jonathan said, "The mission forms part of our wider international trade development activity, including work on market access, participation in international trade shows, outward missions and the work of our representatives in-market."

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

Further details about export opportunities for British red meat and dairy can be found in the AHDB analysis Prospects for UK agri-food exports.



First-hand insight at the heart of production

AHDB (Beef & Lamb) Senior Engagement Manager Elizabeth Swancott played a key role in hosting the inward mission delegates on farm.



Working with the AHDB Export team, Elizabeth helped showcase farming systems and championed world-class British produce during their visit to the West Country, which included a tour of Warren Farm above the iconic Cheddar Gorge.

Elizabeth helped to organise a farm tour to provide insight into sheep and beef suckler systems and she also gave a presentation on lamb meat eating quality, highlighting the benefits of grass-based production.

She said: “While AHDB regularly attends trade shows to promote British agriculture, walking the farm gave visitors an understanding of our high standards in animal health, welfare and environmental stewardship.”

“Demonstrating the attention to detail in our red meat supply chain is of paramount importance to compete on the global market”

Elizabeth was able to speak with buyers face-to-face, giving her the chance to showcase the expertise of British farmers and the quality behind their food production.

She added: “A standout moment for me was hearing a buyer say how valuable it was to finally visit a UK farm in person. Until then, their only exposure had been through trade stand displays and promotional literature.

“Seeing it first-hand brought a deeper appreciation for the high standards and the connection to the natural landscapes behind our farming practices. They were genuinely impressed with our farms’ attention to animal welfare and the commitment to environmental stewardship woven into every part of the operation.

“Drawing on my background as a data analyst specialising in import and export trends, I’ve come to understand just how vital the export market is, not only in shaping demand and influencing farmgate prices, but also in maintaining essential carcass balance across both the beef and lamb industry.

“It was great to build on my background and interact with buyers, explaining how lambs are finished in the UK and how our systems have the potential to satisfy consumer demands on a global level.”



Meet the team

Contact your regional Engagement Manager to get involved in upcoming activities, discover the support available for your business, and see how AHDB is investing your levy.

North West

Karl Pendlebury

karl.pendlebury@ahdb.org.uk
07392 319 847



Karl brings over 40 years' experience in the beef and lamb sector to the Engagement team and is well known for his breadth of knowledge. After studying at Myerscough Agricultural College, he built his career working across suckler and finishing units, sheep enterprises and arable, before moving into auditing food businesses from farm level through to major retailers. He later managed technical supply chains and specifications for a leading retailer and oversaw AHDB's quality schemes. Karl is now firmly embedded back with farmers, sharing expertise and insight.

South West

Tom Edwards

tom.edwards@ahdb.org.uk
07702 688 165



Tom is the Engagement Manager for Beef & Lamb in the South West, working with levy payers and stakeholders across the region. Based near Exeter, he graduated from the Royal Agricultural University with a master's in Countryside Management, specialising in water quality research. He went on to build his career in the agricultural sector with Catchment Sensitive Farming and Devon Wildlife Trust, where he advised farmers on water quality, agri-environment schemes, soil health and habitat creation. Tom now brings this expertise to supporting beef and lamb producers in the South West.



North East

Emily Symonds

emily.symonds@ahdb.org.uk
07964 243 69



Emily brings strong experience across the beef and lamb supply chain to her role as Engagement Manager for the North East. After completing a BSc in Animal Science, she joined ABP's graduate programme within the Technical team before moving to QMS, where she focused on market development and exports. She later worked in R&D, connecting businesses with science and translating insights into practical knowledge at farm level. Now well established at AHDB, Emily supports levy payers in the region with expertise and guidance.

Midlands

Grace Whitlow

grace.whitlow@ahdb.org.uk
07425 504 477



Grace is the Engagement Manager for Beef & Lamb in the Midlands and the main point of contact for levy payers and stakeholders in the region. Raised on a beef and arable farm in Worcestershire, she studied Agri-Food Marketing with Business at Harper Adams University before joining the NFU, where she led on environmental policy for water quality and ammonia. Since moving to AHDB in 2020, Grace has built strong links with farmers through technical resources and engagement activity. Based in Worcestershire, she remains actively involved on her family's farm.

South East and East Anglia

Kate Thompson

katrina.thompson@ahdb.org.uk
Mobile: 07392 319264



Kate is the Engagement Manager for Beef & Lamb in the South East and East Anglia, acting as the main contact for levy payers and stakeholders across the regions. A bioscience graduate with a strong farming background, Kate has long been passionate about the sector. She has also built valuable experience within AHDB, having previously worked in both the Benchmarking and Communications teams.

SAFEGUARDING British sheep meat IN FRANCE

A campaign reinforcing the position of British sheep meat in its biggest export market is being expanded.

Our partnership with Interbev – the National Interprofessional Association of Livestock and Meat in France – to deliver the Changeons l’Agneau (Let’s Change Lamb) campaign has delivered impressive results in Hauts-de-France over the past year.

The campaign has played a major role in upskilling butchers and focusing on smaller cuts to help drive demand among younger French consumers and, as a result, is expanding to cover the wider eastern region of France.

We supported head butchers, apprentices and in-store teams across both independent shops and major supermarket chains to help them diversify their lamb offering, adopt innovative cuts, reduce waste and improve profit margins. Highlights from the past year include:

- Lamb turnover increased in 35 ambassador stores across France by an average of +3.2%, despite a national decline in consumption of -4%
- In the northern region where AHDB’s efforts were most concentrated, 22 Match stores reported sales growth of between +5% and +25%
- 68% of professionals surveyed reported a significant positive impact on lamb sales following their participation in the training programme

In a further positive move, lamb training in French butchery schools (CFAs) has been successful. These AHDB-supported modules will be integrated into official butcher training curricula starting in 2026, helping to ensure lamb remains a familiar and profitable option for the next generation of butchers.

Lucille Brillaud, AHDB Marketing and Communications Manager, said: “Through strategic partnerships, targeted training and a consistent multi-channel approach.”

“AHDB is helping to secure the future of British lamb in France – the UK’s largest export market for sheep meat”



“The ‘Changeons l’Agneau’ campaign is not just a promotional effort, it’s a long-term investment in demand, visibility and commercial resilience. It brings measurable, lasting value to levy payers, both now and into the future.

“After a successful launch in Hauts-de-France in April 2024, AHDB has extended its support for the campaign to cover the east of the country.

“At a time when French lamb production is shrinking and imports are rising, this campaign positions British lamb as the high-quality, margin-friendly, easy-to-prepare solution butchers are looking for. More than 50% of lamb consumed in France is imported. British lamb alone accounts for nearly 25% of the market, making France a strategic export destination.

“This year, market conditions have created further opportunities for world-class British sheep meat in this key market. With a growing reliance on imported lamb to meet domestic demand, we will continue to build on the success of the campaign to date and help ensure quality British sheep meat thrives in the French market.”

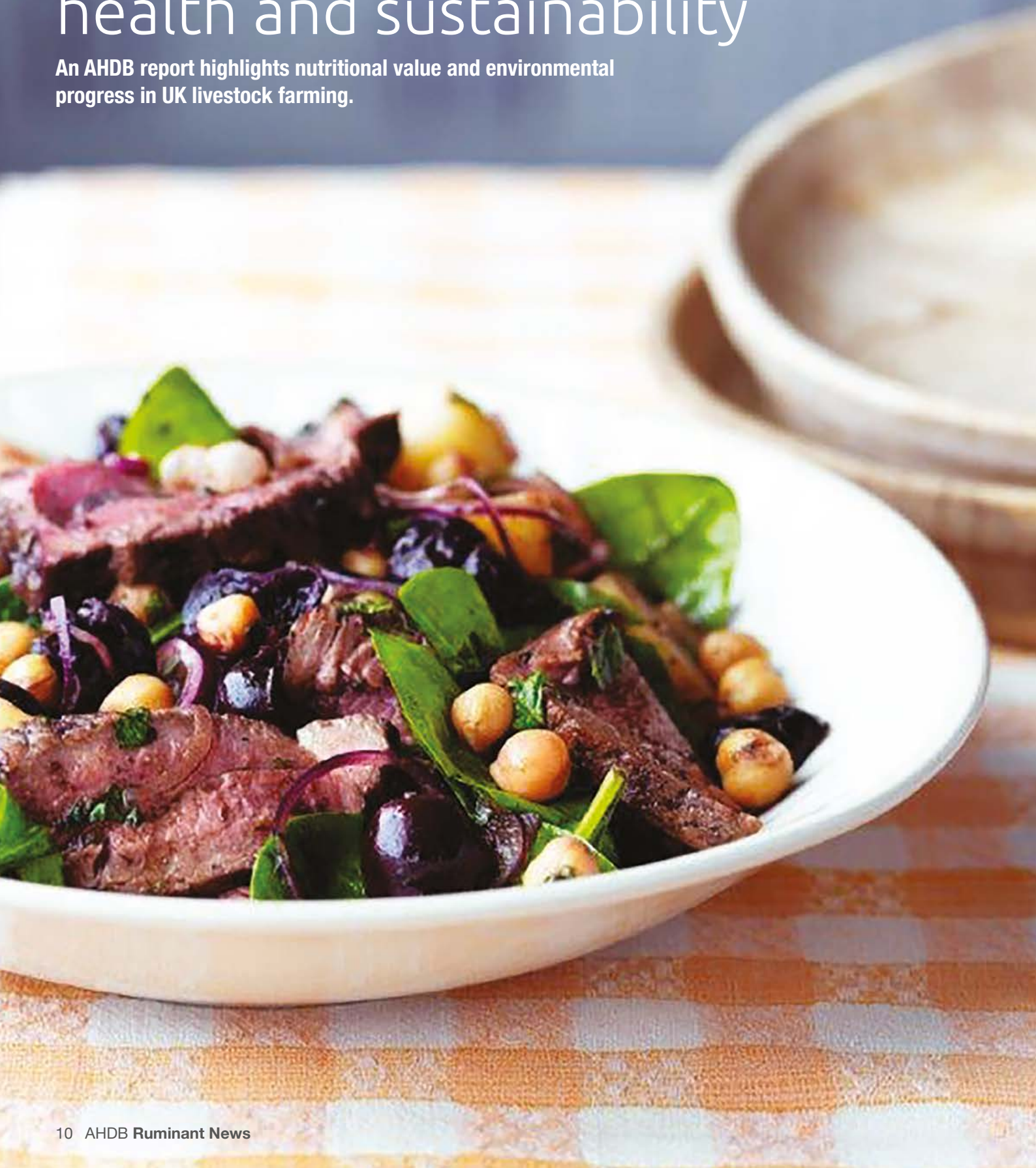
Further information for beef and sheep meat importers can be found by visiting the Quality Meat from Britain website qualitymeatfrombritain.com

Y'A PAS QUE LE GIGOT DANS L'AGNEAU



RED MEAT'S ROLE in health and sustainability

An AHDB report highlights nutritional value and environmental progress in UK livestock farming.



Our new evidence-based report challenges the narrative around red meat, calling for a more balanced view of its role in both human health and environmental sustainability.

A nutritional powerhouse

Lean, unprocessed red meat remains one of the most nutrient-dense foods available, offering high-quality protein, iron, zinc and vitamin B12 – nutrients that are especially vital for children, adolescents, pregnant women and older adults. A single serving of cooked lean beef can provide over half the recommended daily intake for protein, selenium, niacin (vitamin B3) and vitamin B12, as well as nearly 50% of daily zinc and 25% of iron needs.

Despite this, data from the UK's National Diet and Nutrition Survey reveals widespread deficiencies, particularly in iron, selenium and zinc. Nearly half of adolescent girls and a quarter of women aged 19–64 fall below the recommended intake for iron. The report argues that reducing red meat consumption without considering these nutritional gaps could worsen public health outcomes.

Processed vs unprocessed

It is also important to differentiate between lean, unprocessed red meat and processed meat products. While processed meats are more strongly linked to chronic diseases, lean red meat offers health benefits that are often overlooked when both are grouped together in dietary guidelines and research studies investigating the link between meat consumption and non-communicable disease risk.

Smarter meat reduction, not elimination

Rather than blanket reductions in red meat consumption to help meet greenhouse gas emission targets, we support tailored strategies aligned with the UK Government's Eatwell Guide, which recommends limiting red and processed meat to 70 g per day, around 500 g a week. Adhering to the Eatwell Guide can significantly reduce diet-related diseases and improve overall health. It is also environmentally

beneficial, with the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 31%, land use by 34% and water use by 17%.

However, less than 1% of the UK population currently follows the Eatwell Guide. Focusing efforts on increasing adherence could go a long way to supporting both public health and the UK's net-zero goals. For individuals already within the recommended intake, further reductions are unnecessary and may increase the risk of micronutrient deficiencies. Public health initiatives should therefore prioritise heavy meat consumers, reducing their red meat consumption to no more than 70 g/day – particularly men aged 19–39, who average 86 g/day – to help balance nutrition and sustainability.

UK livestock farms and the path to net zero

Environmental concerns around red meat are also addressed. UK agriculture contributes 12% of national greenhouse gas emissions, with livestock accounting for just 7% – far less than the transport or energy sectors. In the report, we highlight initiatives like the ARCZero project in Northern Ireland, where some farms have already achieved net zero through practices that enhance soil carbon storage and biodiversity.

Our broader baselining study, involving 170 farms across Great Britain, is now underway to better quantify agriculture's environmental contributions, including carbon sequestration, water quality improvements and biodiversity gains. The study is supported by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS).

Livestock and circular farming

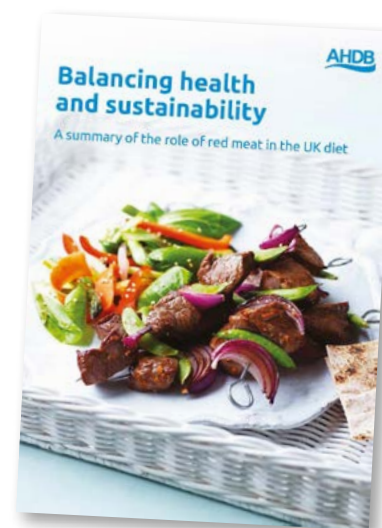
The role of livestock in circular farming is frequently underacknowledged in discussions about sustainable food production. Grazing animals help convert inedible plant material into high-quality protein, reduce food waste and support soil health. In certain landscapes, their presence is vital for maintaining biodiversity and soil quality, making them an important part of the sustainability conversation.

A global perspective

With global demand for protein rising, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates livestock productivity must increase by 1.7% annually to meet food security goals. The UK's climate-resilient, sustainable livestock systems are well-positioned to contribute, especially as climate change disrupts production elsewhere. Reducing domestic output could lead to increased imports from countries with a higher carbon footprint.

A responsible approach to red meat

We call for a shift towards a more discerning and responsible approach to red meat, one that recognises its nutritional value, supports tailored public health strategies and embraces sustainable farming practices. Rather than cutting meat consumption across the board, the focus should be on optimising production and recognising the environmental services livestock farming can provide.



Read the summarised and full versions of the report at ahdb.org.uk/role-of-red-meat-report

Farmbench PROFITABILITY OUTLOOK

Farm profitability fell across suckler herds, but breeding flocks showed stronger results on the year, according to our latest Farmbench data for 2023–24.

Only the top quarter of severely disadvantaged area (SDA) and non-SDA suckler herds achieved profitability, continuing a trend observed since 2020–21. These herds consistently maintained lower variable, feed, forage and overhead costs compared with the middle 50% and bottom 25%. They also benefited from higher daily liveweight gains (DLWG), weaning weights and value per kilogram – all of which contributed to stronger incomes.

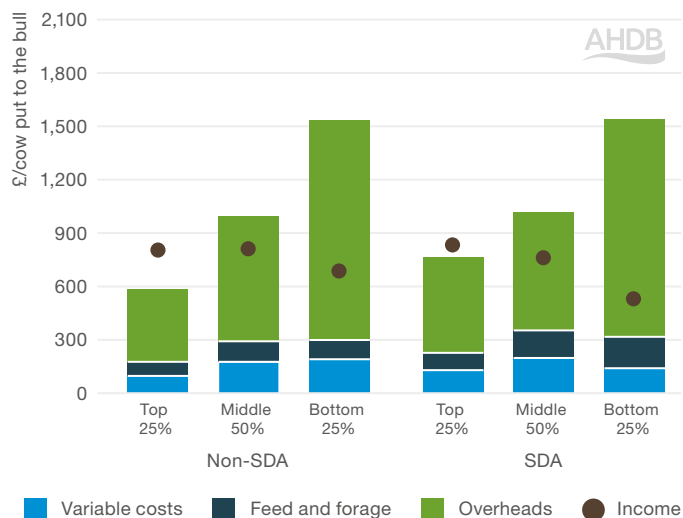


Figure 1. SDA and non-SDA suckler herd cost of production

Source: AHDB

Top-performing SDA herds earned a profit of £63.95 per cow put to the bull, while the middle 50% and bottom 25% recorded losses of £258.98 and £1,007.04, respectively.

Compared to the previous year, profits and losses worsened across all groups. The top 25% saw a 27% drop in profit, the middle experienced a 31% fall, while the bottom 25% endured a 116% increase in losses, driven by rising costs outpacing income.

Non-SDA herds within the top 25% performed better and, despite earning approximately 3% less income per cow than SDA farms, they achieved a £217.62 profit per cow due to 24% lower cost of production compared with SDA herds. Losses for the middle 50% and bottom 25% were also smaller at £188.19 and £845.67, respectively. Overall, profits in the top 25% of non-SDA farms increased by 21%, and losses for the middle 50% and bottom 25% reduced by 45% and 14%, respectively.

Breeding flock performance

Breeding flocks showed strong performance for 2023–24, with both SDA and non-SDA breeding flocks turning a profit.

The top 25% recorded higher net margins compared with the 2023–24 average – non-SDA flocks recorded a difference of £38.23 and SDA flocks showed a difference of £52.15 per ewe put to the ram. SDA flocks recovered from a previous loss, posting a £20.21 improvement in net margin compared with 2022–23. Non-SDA farms remained profitable across both years, with a £15.49 increase per ewe year-on-year.

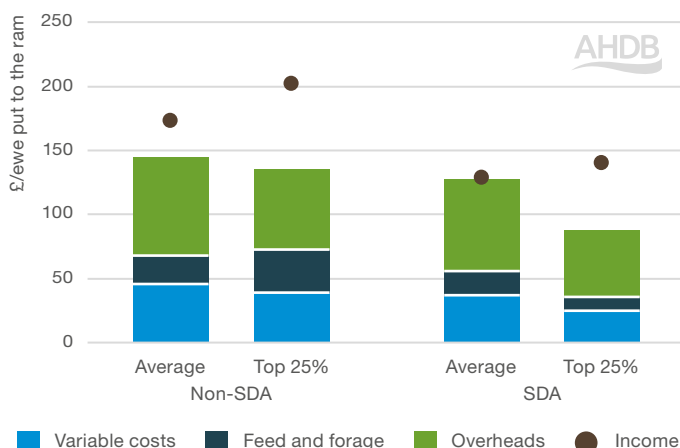


Figure 2. SDA and non-SDA breeding flock cost of production

Source: AHDB

Compared with the top 25%, both non-SDA and SDA flocks earned less per ewe – down £28.97 and £11.22, respectively. This impacted overall net margins.

On average, non-SDA flocks generated £44.33 more income per ewe than SDA flocks. The biggest difference was finishing lambs, with non-SDA flocks earning £40.74 more per ewe. Store and retained lambs showed less significant price gaps between the two land types.

Variable and overhead costs also played a key role in shaping net margins. Compared with the top 25%, non-SDA flocks spent an additional £6.27 per ewe on variable costs, while SDA flocks spent £11.68 more. Vet and medicine costs showed the greatest disparity, rising by 8% within non-SDA flocks and 52% for SDA flocks. Overhead costs followed a similar pattern, with non-SDA farms spending £13.55 more and SDA farms £20.85 more per ewe than the top 25%.

Boost your farm's performance with Farmbench

Are you a beef or lamb producer looking to improve your business efficiency and profitability?

Farmbench is an online benchmarking tool designed to help livestock farmers make informed, data-driven decisions. By comparing key performance indicators, such as input costs and daily liveweight gain, with other farms locally and nationally, you can identify areas for improvement and build a more resilient business.

Why use Farmbench?

Think of Farmbench as a health check for your farm. Here's what you can expect:

- **Detailed business insights:** book a free one-to-one session to review your farm data and receive a detailed report that showcases your strengths and identifies areas for improvement based on comparisons with similar farms across the UK
- **Regional discussion groups:** join local groups, where available, to share insights and discuss benchmarking results

Support to get you started

Not sure where to begin? Our regional Farmbench managers are here to help. Whether you prefer a visit to your farm or a virtual meeting via Teams, they will guide you through the process and upload the data for you. Visit ahdb.org.uk/farmbench-contacts to learn more.



Julie Clark

North West
julie.clark@ahdb.org.uk
07778 144273

Laura Smith

North East
laura.smith@ahdb.org.uk
07407 875657



Olivia McDonagh

East Anglia, West and Wales
olivia.mcdonagh@ahdb.org.uk
07523 978255

Zoe Kingham

South West
zoe.kingham@ahdb.org.uk
07776 594789



Key drivers of better performance:

The most profitable flocks and herds had:

- Lower variable and overhead costs
- Higher animal output
- Better control of feed, forage, vet and medicine costs

The data reinforces that monitoring performance and understanding cost of production are essential for profitability.

ENVIROBEEF: genes driving GREENER PROFITS

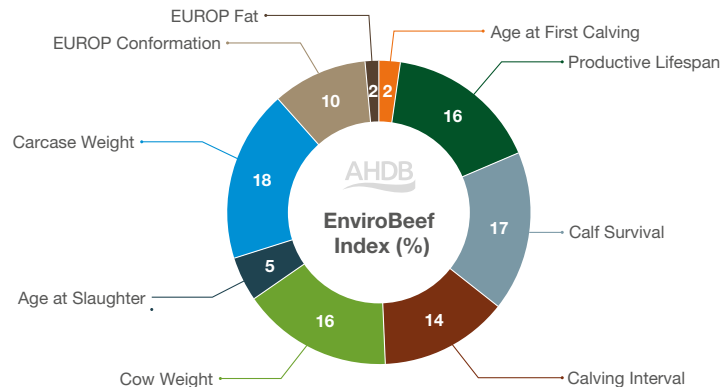
AHDB has launched a new tool to help suckler producers lower carbon emissions and improve profitability. Harriet Bunning, AHDB's Lead Animal Genetics Expert, explains how the tool will benefit levy payers.

Amid growing pressure on beef producers to reduce emissions, we have launched EnviroBeef, a new genetic tool to help suckler farmers lower their carbon footprint while improving productivity and profitability.

EnviroBeef is a genetic evaluation developed by AHDB and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Unlike other genetics tools, it uses national data from multiple breeds and systems, making it applicable across a wide range of beef herds – including crossbred animals.

"Emissions are a big risk to the beef industry," explains Harriet. "Genetics and breeding consistently rank as one of the most effective mitigation strategies. EnviroBeef not only helps cut emissions but also boosts animal health, welfare and financial returns – it is a triple win for farmers."

Farmers can use the tool to select their most efficient females – those that calve sooner and rear more calves over their lifetime. Artificially inseminated and stock bulls can be chosen that will reduce days to slaughter and improve output, thus lowering days on farm and methane produced.



How it works

EnviroBeef evaluates an animal's genetic potential based on nine maternal and production traits using data from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) and carcase data from over 14 million slaughtered animals across the UK (see pie chart for indexes).

All this information is accessed through our National Beef Evaluations and converted into a single index, allowing farmers to compare animals across all beef breeds. An animal with a score of -10%, for example, has a 10% lower carbon footprint than the GB average.

Who can benefit?

The tool is best suited to herds that calve at least five animals in a block and sell finished cattle in batches of five or more. It is not currently effective for:

- Small herds with limited data, because a cohort is needed for comparison
- Farmers selling beef directly (as carcase data may not be available)

However, for the majority of commercial suckler systems, the tool provides clear advantages. Improvements can be seen within one generation and build cumulatively over time, says Harriet.

Accuracy and future developments

EnviroBeef only assigns scores to animals with an accuracy of over 25%. AI sires tend to have the most accurate results due to the higher number of progeny and respective records.

While the tool doesn't yet use genomics, we are working on incorporating genomic data to improve accuracy for young animals and extend benefits to smaller herds.

Buckinghamshire beef farmer and AHDB Beef & Lamb Sector Council member Ben Harman adds: "The great thing about EnviroBeef is that, at its core, it is a measure of efficiency, and as we all know, profitability and efficiency go hand in hand. This makes EnviroBeef a valuable selection tool to aid suckler producers of any breed who are looking to improve the profitability of their enterprise."

Find out more about EnviroBeef at ahdb.org.uk/envirobeef





JAMES HERRICK, FOLLY FARM, LEICESTERSHIRE

James runs a herd of 140 Stabiliser suckler cows. His focus is to breed efficient cows that perform off forage and grass alone.



The average cow size on his farm is 590 kg and females must calve unassisted over eight to nine weeks. Steers and heifers are finished and are expected to hit growth rates of 1.5 kg/day off grass alone.

James has used estimated breeding values for the past 15 years to select bulls. He explains: "I want a bull that's going to push the herd in the right direction. We reduced calving issues simply by picking easy-calving bulls."

James already uses the National Beef Evaluations to compare his cattle against other breeds. But he is excited about what EnviroBeef can offer.

His current stock bull, Wizard, has an EnviroBeef score of -5.7, meaning his carbon footprint is nearly 6% below the UK average.

"Carbon is important to us, both ethically and practically. It's going to become even more relevant as lenders start offering better rates to farms with low emissions," James explains.

"Breeding more efficient cattle is a great way of improving our carbon footprint, but it also helps our bottom line."

James plans to use productive lifespan data to select efficient replacement females and carcase performance to improve weaning percentages – from 45% to 50% of mature cow weight – off grass alone.

"If a cow calves at two, she needs three calves to turn a profit," James calculates, adding: "Choosing heifers with better longevity helps secure our bottom line."

HOW DO I START USING THE TOOL?

EnviroBeef scores can be found alongside National Beef Evaluation results.

- Access the free tool at ahdbbeef.egenes.co.uk
- Enter the ear tag number with no spaces
- Wait for the page to load

If results don't appear immediately, it may be due to insufficient data. Don't worry – new data is uploaded three times per year (April, August and December), so check again and your animal may appear.



AHDB TACKLES farm data CHALLENGE

AHDB has launched a project to put levy payers in control of their data. Adam Short, AHDB Data Programmes Associate Director, explains more.

We have commissioned a proof-of-concept project as part of our ongoing work to find a solution to farm data sharing. The project aims to demonstrate a technical solution which puts farmers and levy payers in control of their data and how it is shared.

More data than ever is being collected, recorded and shared by farmers – be it for themselves, the supply chain, regulatory or wider purposes. Increased demand for data raises questions about ownership and control, data security and the value and benefits of sharing such information.

Focusing on environmental data to begin with, the proof of concept aims to show how farmers can share data from existing sources such as the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), processor data and feed data with a commercial carbon calculator for the purpose of conducting a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment.

We have been engaging extensively with industry on the topic of data sharing and data governance over the last 12 months. We have also engaged with organisations around the world who have already successfully implemented farmer-led solutions for data sharing. We have recently been to Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark to hear how they have tackled the issue.

Initial stages of the project will gather permissions for the various data access and sharing requirements and clearly outline their uses and limits. For example, farmer and processor permissions will be needed to gain processor data, and farmer and Rural Payments Agency (RPA) permission will be needed to gain BCMS data. Work will then begin on a system that will connect these data sources, and the data uses, e.g. carbon calculators.

At the heart of the system will be a permission centre which will be co-designed and tested by 15 farmers taking part in the project. The aim is that this system will demonstrate real farmer control of data sharing. Farmer trust for any potential system is paramount and is at the forefront of our minds as we move forward with the proof of concept.

As well as working with a small group of farmers on the proof of concept, we plan to engage more widely with farmers and industry stakeholders to ensure levy payer voices are heard and any concerns or suggestions are considered. If you would like to contribute, email environmental.data@ahdb.org.uk

For more information on the importance of the data challenge and our work so far in this area, visit ahdb.org.uk/the-environmental-data-challenge

INVEST IN THE BEST:

Signet-recorded hill rams

Investing in hill rams with superior genetics can realise an extra £600–£1,000 over their working lifetime. Are you making the most of recorded rams?

Signet's Sheepbreeder service, delivered by AHDB, uses pedigree and performance records from ram breeders to generate estimated breeding values (EBVs) and breeding indexes, helping producers to identify genetically superior breeding stock.

Why buy a performance-recorded hill ram?

Identifying superior hill rams is key as their genes will be passed on to future generations. This is important for visible traits, such as growth rate and carcase conformation, and vital when it comes to maternal traits like milk production and prolificacy that can't be assessed visually in a hill flock.

Signet's evaluations now include breeds like the Welsh Mountain and Cheviot which have exploited new genomic technology. Genomic data (information derived from an animal's DNA) can determine not only a ram's parentage, but also its breeding merit through the generation of genomic breeding values.

Why breeding values matter

Breeding values are available that can enhance:

- Lamb survival
- Prolificacy
- Lamb growth rates
- Maternal ability – the ewe's ability to produce milk and rear a heavy lamb
- Carcase conformation
- Worm resistance
- Ewe longevity

Hill farmers interested in enhancing flock efficiency should also consider the importance of ewe mature weight; avoiding sires that produce the largest daughters, which may require more feed over the winter.

Ram buying tips

Factors to consider when buying a recorded ram:

- Set breeding objectives that optimise hill flock profitability
- Talk to the ram breeder about your requirements
- Select rams with the right balance of EBVs to realise these objectives
- Buy early to get access to the widest selection of recorded rams
- Look after the health and nutrition of your rams to ensure they have a long, productive life

Where to find information

Breeding values have never been more accessible, accurate or relevant to hill sheep producers than they are today.

Visit signetdata.com to see the breeding potential of every sheep recorded with Signet.

How recording can improve a hill flock

Over 4,500 Swaledale sheep have been Signet recorded in Tim and Sarah Dunn's Breck House flock over the past decade and every year large differences are seen between the leading homebred sires and the rest of the breeding rams.

A simple comparison showed a top-5% homebred sire produced lambs 8% heavier and 12% more muscular (when scanned at 20 weeks old) than a bought-in ram.

The homebred sire's daughters are predicted to be more prolific and produce more milk – traits that will be passed on for generations to come on the North Yorkshire hills. These differences would be impossible to spot simply by looking at the rams.



MONITORING a journey of LEARNING

We look back at the highlights, projects, results and key learnings from the four current Beef & Lamb Monitor Farms as they near the end of their four-year tenure.

Our Monitor Farm Programme brings together groups of like-minded farmers to share performance information, trial new ideas and discuss what works and what doesn't. Its goal is to deliver practical changes to improve profitability, resilience and sustainability across the beef and sheep sectors.

The four farms were looking for solutions to a variety of issues when they became Monitor Farms.

While facing different challenges during their time as Monitor Farms, common themes emerged across all four.

There was a drive to reduce bought-in feed and use home-grown forage to become more self-sufficient, and a move from monocultures to multi-species and regenerative practices.

Creating new income streams to spread risk was important, while all made their businesses more resilient by addressing

issues such as succession planning, staff structure and time management.

And, most importantly, all were willing to experiment, learn from what wasn't working and adapt, showing how Monitor Farm learning translates into measurable business change – proof that profitability and sustainability must go hand in hand.

UNDERLEY – HEREFORDSHIRE

Run by Ian Farrant and his family, this mixed arable and cattle enterprise has a focus on dairy-beef finishing.

Ian joined the programme looking to reduce their reliance on bought-in feed and monoculture cropping. He also wanted to further explore how beef production could be made sustainable in both profit and environmental terms.

Changes made while a Monitor Farm

- Switched calves from a straw and nut ration to a home-grown total mixed ration using intercropped peas and barley, saving nearly £50k
- Attempted to replace rapemeal with home-grown lupins, which was unsuccessful due to cold/wet climate
- Successfully introduced multi-species herbal leys
- Adopted regular faecal egg counting, avoiding wormers for four years
- Regrooved handling system concrete after Temple Grandin consultation

Outcomes

- Cut £30K, rising to £50K, a year from feed costs
- Improved forage diversity and resilience
- 90% of feed and forage now home-grown
- Gained insights from trials – failures led to other successful changes



ALNHAM FARM – NORTHUMBERLAND

This traditional upland cattle, sheep and arable farm is run by Harry Sordy and his family. They were looking to reduce labour demands and a heavy reliance on subsidies, improve work-life balance, increase business focus and explore grazing-led systems.

Changes made while a Monitor Farm

- Shifted to grazing cereals and unharvested crops
- Introduced paddock grazing for sucklers
- Established 110 hectares of herbal leys under three-year SFI
- Moved from housing sheep January–March to selling lambs by November
- Introduced B&B pigs to utilise empty sheds
- Reduced permanent staff requirements through system changes

Outcomes

- Reduced wintering costs through outwintering cattle and early lamb sales
- Diversified income streams, e.g. fencing, pigs, SFI grazing
- Improved grassland management and deferred grazing capacity
- Annual debt reduction target of 10%

KINGSFORD FARM – DEVON

An organic beef and sheep enterprise focused on grass-first systems, Rob and Liz Priest's family farm had run higher-input livestock systems using fertiliser. They wanted to build on their Progressive Beef discussion group experience, refine rotational grazing and diversify income from infrastructure.

Changes made while a Monitor Farm

- Introduced rotational grazing with no fertiliser (6 t/ha DM yields)
- Trialled biofertilisers from seaweed, compost and bokashi
- Conducted ADAS carbon audits and soil testing
- Used grants for fencing and water infrastructure
- Explored diversification with pigs, storage, vending and tourism
- Changed to smaller cattle breeds for efficiency

Outcomes

- Improved margins through grazing and breed changes
- Developed alternative income streams from unused buildings
- Reduced fertiliser reliance while maintaining forage yields
- 10-year plan to reduce debt by 50% and increase time off

GLOVERS FARM – NORFOLK

Run by David Cross, this former arable-led farm is now livestock-focused with an emphasis on soil health, grazing and resilience. He wanted to improve soil health, reduce input dependency, introduce long-term structure to the business and build a system resilient without BPS.

Changes made while a Monitor Farm

- Introduced mob grazing and no concentrate feeding
- Established herbal leys and trialled lucerne
- Participated in ADAS soil project and beef paddock trials
- Used FARMAX modelling for economic and environmental analysis
- Fenced 100-acre field into trial plots for rotational grazing
- Implemented structured team meetings and succession planning

Outcomes

- Reduced inputs and improved soil biology
- Clearer business structure with succession planning in place
- Improved grazing efficiency and livestock performance
- Data-driven breeding decisions using performance monitoring





A RESILIENT future for FARMING

The Roots to Resilience programme is helping hundreds of farmers embrace change during a challenging time.

Farming is changing fast, and for farmers like Richard Stanbury from Exmoor, adapting is essential. He says, “If you’re going to push forward, you need to have your mindset open to change.”

Richard’s openness to new ideas led him to join Roots to Resilience, a programme launched by AHDB in late 2023. It’s designed to equip farmers with practical tools to improve the economic, social and environmental health of their businesses.

Through collaboration, expert insight and sharing knowledge, Roots to Resilience gives farmers a better understanding of all the factors affecting the success of their farms.

The programme offers a chance to step back, upskill and explore fresh ideas. Farmers can see what’s working and what could be improved.

Roots to Resilience is, in Richard’s words, a “confidence boost that I am doing it right [while I] also learn new things.”

Guiding principles

At its core, Roots to Resilience is built around three clear principles, each helping to guide farmers to reflect on their businesses, set goals and plan for profitability.

- **Ownership**
Farmers take responsibility for their decisions and are willing to try new approaches.
- **Clarity**
Farmers need to be clear about the objectives for the business and why they matter.
- **Community**
Farmers connect through a network of support, exchanging knowledge and supporting others.

Inspiration from the experts

With these principles in mind, farmers share and grow their knowledge at a series of workshops across the UK. But Roots to Resilience also gives farmers the chance to gain valuable insights from agricultural experts.

One of the biggest names to take to the stage is Dallas Mount – whose Ranching for Profit course has helped thousands of farmers in the USA.

Dallas encourages farmers to work on their business – not in it – being clear on the values and goals of the farm and looking at the big picture to develop practical strategies.

Herefordshire farmer George Goring found Dallas’s approach eye-opening – encouraging him to ask fundamental questions: “Why are we doing it? Is the money better invested somewhere else? What’s the return on investment looking like?”



GET READY FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Roots to Resilience “made things a lot clearer in my head on the direction we were going,” adds George. He was able to step outside the bubble of day-to-day working and see exactly where he could reduce costs and grow the business.

The succession question

Of course, farming is about more than finances. One of the biggest challenges facing farming families today is the issue of succession. Recognising this, Roots to Resilience brought in Elaine Froese, an expert in family communication and farm succession planning.

Her Discuss the Undiscussable course helped Leicestershire farmer Greg Parkes and his family talk openly about the future of their farm.

“How do you blend family and personal dynamics with running a successful business?” Greg asks.

The course gave Greg and his family practical tools to have more constructive

conversations, respecting every point of view, while also being realistic about the commercial needs of the farm.

Learning from each other

Roots to Resilience isn’t just expert-led, it’s a space for farmers to connect, share experiences and build lasting support networks.

Every farm is different, but this peer support helps farmers tackle challenges with a common understanding. And it’s the foundation for a network that lasts long after each course has finished.

As Greg says, “We’re still in touch, and we have similar problems or concerns that we work through together.”

Planning for a confident future

Now, Roots to Resilience is helping farmers across the UK assess where they are, decide where they want to be and create a plan to get there.

Ed Bray, a farmer who attended last year, describes it as “a real investment in myself personally and in the business. It gave me a fresh perspective and I came home with lots of new ideas and skills.”

Meanwhile, Greg has used the programme to diversify successfully, running book fairs for primary schools alongside cattle farming – and building relationships with local customers.

Over in Herefordshire, George is also diversifying, as well as forging ahead with plans for a more efficient, sustainable operation. That includes rotational grazing and herbal leys to enhance the soil structure.

To discover how Roots to Resilience has helped farmers take control of their businesses, find out more and sign up for upcoming events at ahdb.org.uk/roots-to-resilience

INSPIRING the next generation at ON-FARM EVENTS

This year, we partnered with LEAF to deliver three Focus on Farming events, giving students a hands-on taste of agriculture and direct access to industry experts.

In February, 120 secondary-school students took part in practical activities and conversations with farmers and industry professionals at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire. The students 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 focus on sustainability.

In June, over 100 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-school students to their dairy farm, North Farm in Wiltshire. The event was oversubscribed, reflecting growing interest from schools in connecting students with real-world farming experiences.

The students saw 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 also highlighted the vital role of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in agriculture.

Kathryn Catto from North Farm 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 to 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 as 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.”

Helping young people understand where their food comes from and the vital role that farming plays in feeding the nation reflects our commitment to educating and inspiring the next generation. Initiatives like this help secure a strong future for UK agriculture and deepen public appreciation of the industry.





All photographs © Peter Fleming, Shooting Stone Media





Unlocking the **VALUE OF LAMB**

Discover how AHDB is spotlighting British lamb and its producers.

We drive opportunity for British lamb producers by creating increased demand through targeted, research-led campaigns; improved market access via cultural engagement and export support; smarter planning with trusted market intelligence; and greater visibility for British lamb and its producers. Learn more about these approaches below.

Campaigns that build demand

Our consumer-facing campaigns are designed to increase awareness and position British lamb as a naturally delicious dinner option. These campaigns are backed by research, tailored to audience needs and delivered across channels including TV, social media and in supermarkets.

Simply Beef & Lamb

This long-running website and social media campaign champions the quality and sustainability of British red meat. It's a trusted source of recipe inspiration and nutritional advice, helping consumers feel confident in choosing lamb. Visit simplybeefandlamb.co.uk to see more.

Let's Eat Balanced

Let's Eat Balanced positions British lamb as part of a healthy, balanced diet, alongside beef and dairy. The campaign addresses misconceptions and highlights the natural benefits of eating red meat and dairy, supporting long-term trust and relevance.

Love Lamb Week

Held every September, and now in its 10th year, Love Lamb Week is a celebration of British lamb and the farmers who produce it. We support producers with toolkits, social media assets and press outreach to help tell your story. It's a chance to connect with consumers, highlight standards and build pride in the sector.

Export success: Let's Change Lamb

France is the UK's largest export market for sheep meat, and our Let's Change Lamb campaign – delivered in partnership with Interbev – is helping secure British lamb's future there.

With over 50% of lamb consumed in France being imported, and British lamb accounting for nearly 25% of the market, this campaign is a strategic investment in visibility, demand and long-term resilience.

Read more about this campaign on page 8.

Market intelligence to support decision-making

Our Lamb Market Outlook gives producers the insights needed to make informed decisions. These cover:

- Supply and demand forecasts
- Retail and foodservice trends
- Consumer behaviour and preferences
- Trade and export developments



In 2025, UK sheep meat exports are forecast to reach 92,000 tonnes – up 13% year-on-year. This growth is driven by increased production and reduced domestic consumption, freeing up more product for export. The EU remains the dominant market, with France, Germany and Belgium leading the way.

Despite early-year dips in volume, export value has increased – showing strong overseas demand even at higher price points.

Cultural relevance creates new opportunities

In the UK, lamb consumption has been in steady decline during the last 20 years. This is driven by comparatively high prices compared with other proteins, such as chicken. For the Muslim community, however, lamb is still a primary protein source.

While Muslims make up around 6.5% of the UK population, we estimate that they account for 30% of lamb sales in terms of volume. As they mainly consume halal meat, farmers can benefit from finding out more about the halal sector and its requirements.

British lamb plays a central role in key cultural and religious celebrations, particularly Ramadan and Qurbani. These periods see a surge in demand for high-quality, halal-certified lamb.

Learn more about opportunities in Halal at ahdb.org.uk/halal

Ramadan

During Ramadan, lamb is a staple in many households. We support retailers and processors with promotional materials and messaging that highlight the quality, welfare standards and traceability of British lamb. This helps build trust and preference among Muslim consumers.

Further information about highlighting the benefit of British red meat during Ramadan is on our website.

Qurbani

Qurbani, the religious sacrifice during Eid al-Adha, presents a unique opportunity for producers. We collaborate with stakeholders across the supply chain to ensure British lamb meets the requirements of this important tradition.

By supporting halal supply chains and raising awareness, we help producers access this seasonal demand and build lasting relationships with diverse communities.

More information is available in the Understanding the Qurbani publication.

Our resources, toolkits and opportunities for producers to engage with campaigns and share their stories can be found at ahdb.org.uk/lamb

SMALL SHIFTS for BIG GAINS

Running a modern livestock and arable farming business demands more than managing animals and crops. It requires clear thinking, effective leadership and the ability to adapt in a fast-changing environment.

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 from the event 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 lasting impact. Over time, these habits improve clarity, reduce firefighting and create space for longer-term thinking.

Mindset 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

Livestock and arable 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 with small teams. That might look like:

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

Leadership specialist Gemma Krasucka, who works with elite sports teams, shared at the Forum 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 encourages farmers to view rest not as 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, a livestock and arable farmer from the South, was one of the many delegates who embraced the challenge outlined at the AgriLeader forum and reflects on how much has changed in just a few months.

“The journey has been good. I've recently taken the 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 livestock 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 has 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

NEWS & UPDATES

DIARY DATES

Protecting animal health – IPM for livestock farmers

Preston – 11 November

Carnforth – 11 November

Cumbria – 12 November

Livestock slurry – Your liquid asset

Somerset – 11 November

Devon – 13 November

Cumbria – 26 November

Cover crop connections

Bedfordshire – 10 December

Minimising carcase losses for better returns

Norfolk – 10 December

Keep an eye on our events page for the most up-to-date information and details on how to book your place: ahdb.org.uk/events



Scan the QR code to sign up to receive the latest information from AHDB, update your preferences and receive important updates or visit preferencecentre.ahdb.org.uk

THE AHDB CATALOGUE IS THE NEW WAY TO ORDER YOUR RESOURCES

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- Educational posters and stickers for the classroom and farm visits
- Technical publications with practical tips and best practice guides
- Marketing material to help your business thrive
- Resource to support the meat trade industry

All items are free to order for UK levy payers. You can order online by visiting resources.ahdb.org.uk

BLUETONGUE UPDATES

Find the latest Bluetongue updates and webinars at ahdb.org.uk/bluetongue. Stay informed, stay protected.

GROW YOUR GRASSLAND SKILLS ONLINE

The AHDB and NIAB Herbal Leys and Diverse Swards BASIS online course will build confidence and provide practical knowledge to improve soil health, livestock performance and farm resilience through better forage management.

Course information

Launching in December, the course offers four self-paced online modules. These cover the benefits, species selection, establishment and management of herbal leys. Participants will receive practical, evidence-based guidance to help them make the most of herbal leys on their farms. Additionally, the course provides BASIS CPD points for advisers and consultants.

The course is supported by BASIS and industry sponsors, including Cotswold Seeds, DLF Seeds, Anglian Water and the Soil Association.

Who can apply?

Open to farmers, advisers, consultants and land managers across the UK, with a discounted rate for levy payers.

Discount for levy payers

Levy payers can register through the AHDB website using a discount code provided at sign-up. This reduces the course cost to £100 for full access (or £25 per module).

More information about the course and details on how to book a place will be posted on the AHDB events pages soon.

