



### LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS



When planning forward, we must also look back at where we have been and learn from past experiences, as to what has worked well and importantly, not so well. We can then try something different (if needed) and monitor the impact.

The latest Dairy Costings Focus Report is based on data from 1,068 conventional herds and 83 organic herds using our dairy costings service and highlights key trends from the year ending March 2024. An insight into trends over the past 10 years reveals that while average milk yields

have slightly increased and remain in the mid 8,000 litres/cow range, milk solids have hit a new record of 646kg/cow, marking almost an 11% increase over the past 10 years, outpacing the 5.4% rise in milk yield. This is most likely due to producers focusing on feed efficiency and fulfilling their milk contract requirements.

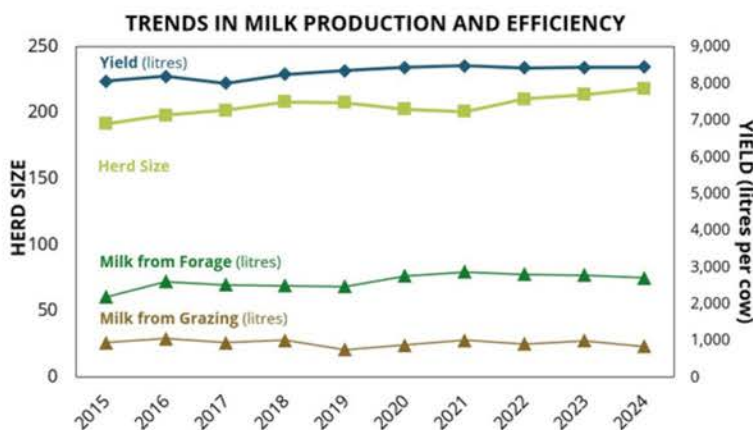
Meanwhile, milk prices have fluctuated from what was a relatively high 32.24ppl in 2014 to a low of 23.65ppl in 2017, and a high of 46.18ppl last year before settling to average 38.19ppl in 2023/24.

The gap between the highest and lowest milk prices has also fluctuated, the difference peaking at 13.8ppl in March 2023 before narrowing to 11.6ppl in March 24. It is likely that the range in pricing even within contracts – let alone between them – is going to widen in future.

Average herd sizes have increased by 34 cows, and now stand at 219 cows compared to 185 in 2014. Stocking rates have also seen a rise, reaching 2.39 cows/hectare compared to 2.25 cows/hectare a decade ago.

The atrocious weather this winter/spring has meant that, unsurprisingly, milk from forage has decreased by 3% compared to last year, to 2,691 litres per cow - although Scotland managed to buck the trend with a 16% year-on-year increase.

On the health front, herd health has improved in nearly all areas. Mastitis cases have halved from 52 cases per 100 cows reported in 2014 to an average of 26 cases per 100 cows this year, indicating better management, facilities, breeding and recording.



Download your FREE copy of the Dairy Costings Focus Report 2024 at [www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com)

Written by Kathryn Rowland, Senior Farm Services Manager

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Written by Felicity Gale,  
Farm Services Specialist

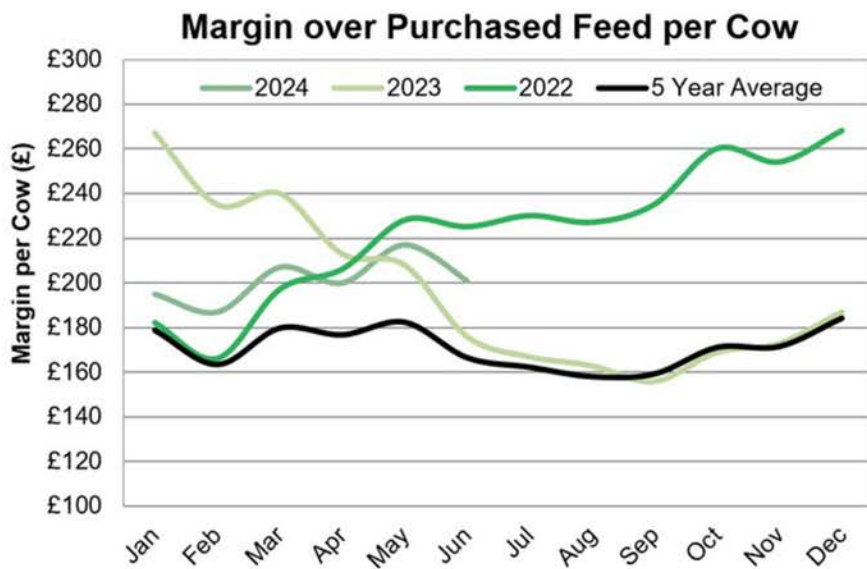
# Dairy Manager Update

Latest monthly results of herds using Kingshay's dairy costings service are showing a continual increase in milk prices month-on-month.

June 2024 averaged 39 pence per litre, 4% higher than the same month of the previous year. Whilst milk prices have been increasing, concentrate prices per tonne are decreasing in price, currently 12% lower at £306/tonne compared to June 2023. Total concentrate use decreased slightly by 1% to 7.9kg/cow/day in June 2024, all purchased feed cost/litre dropped by 12% to 9.9ppl.

Monthly Results	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24
Milk Yield (l/cow/day)	↔ 27.4	↔ 27.5	↑ 26.8
Change on last year	0%	0%	1%
Milk from Forage (l/cow/day)	↓ 8.7	↓ 10.3	↓ 9.2
Change on last year	-9%	-8%	-7%
Milk Price (ppl)	38.8	38.3	39.0
Concentrate Use (kg/cow/day)	8.9	8.1	7.9
All Purch. Feed Costs (ppl)	11.4	9.9	9.9
MOPF (£/cow)	£202	£215	£200
Change on last year	-4%	3%	10%

Source: Kingshay Dairy Manager



Overall, the margin over purchased feed per cow was 10% higher in June 2024 at £200/cow, compared to £181/cow in June 2023. May 2024 was the first month that saw a positive upturn in margins, at £215 per cow. Previously, margin over purchased feed per cow had reached its lowest level in September 2023 at £156/cow, but has steadily been rising since, with milk price improvements and lower purchased feed costs.

Dairy costings Kingshay give the first 2 months free. Kingshay Insight Members can get the Regular Dairy Manager package included in their membership.



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Written by Sarah Tomlinson BVM&S MRCVS,  
TB Advisory Service Technical Director.

## "IN MY FIELD"

Bovine TB (bTB) is the most important infectious disease that affects the UK cattle industry. A breakdown can be devastating to farms for many reasons but one of the biggest is the impact movement restrictions can have.

One option that can help mitigate the impact of a TB breakdown is to move cattle into an Approved Finishing Unit or AFU.

An AFU is a holding licenced by APHA to take clear tested cattle from a restricted herd. They are housed units that comply with certain biosecurity measures, such as being badger proof and having policies in place to minimise the risk of manure from the unit on other cattle holdings and wildlife.

For more guidance and information on how to apply, go to [Approved Finishing Units \(AFUs\) in England and Wales - Bovine TB | TB Hub](#)

Most AFUs take store cattle to be finished, but there are also farmers running calf rearing AFUs that will take calves on milk or weaned.

AFUs are marked on the ibTB map [ibTB - Mapping bovine TB \(bTB\) in England and Wales](#) as purple squares and information about the unit is displayed. Many cattle finishing units are AFUs as there are benefits to the business of no statutory TB testing required; no whole herd testing, no tracer testing and no restrictions on animals moving on to the unit.

Once cattle enter an AFU they can only leave via an orange market, to go directly to another AFU or to slaughter.

The TB Advisory Service offers free TB biosecurity advice to all livestock keepers in England which includes a discussion about limiting the impacts a TB breakdown could have on the herd.



E [info@tbas.org.uk](mailto:info@tbas.org.uk)

W [tbas.org.uk](http://tbas.org.uk)

T 01306 779410



Written by Sarah Bolt,  
Technical Knowledge Exchange Manager

## Optimise Forage and Winter Feed Strategy



The wet winter, one of the wettest on record, significantly delayed the first cut of silage and essential grassland management activities this year. Given that forage constitutes over 50% of a dairy cow's dry matter intake, optimising silage quality is vital for farm profitability and animal performance during winter. The delayed cut has potentially led to silage with a higher proportion of overwintered material. This material tends to be more fibrous and less digestible, which could negatively impact fermentation and intake if not balanced correctly in the ration.

Trouw Nutrition, who analyse our forage samples, have reported the aggregate results from analysis of 500 silage samples. They showed a slight decline in digestibility (D values) and metabolisable energy (ME) compared to last year. The increased fibre content (ADF and NDF) and high lignin levels confirm a more mature crop, which could slow fermentation. Additionally, lower levels of totally fermentable protein (TFP) and totally fermentable carbohydrates (TFC) emphasise the need for careful balancing of rations to maintain rumen efficiency and microbial protein yield.

Matching your animal's requirements with nutrient supply is key to maximising production. It is therefore crucial to regularly analyse your silage to understand its nutritional content and make necessary adjustments. This will help in correctly balancing rations, reducing reliance on purchased feeds, and ultimately lowering your farm's carbon footprint. We recommend that you have your forages analysed monthly through the feeding period, as the analysis will change as you move through the clamp.

Calculating winter forage stocks is crucial to ensure you have enough supplies and avoid shortages. The Silage Calculator on the Kingshay App simplifies this process significantly - **bringing you business success without the stress!**

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# Women in Dairy Conference

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## Kingshay News

### Welcome back Emma Puddy

Kingshay members may remember Emma from her years in the Technical Team from 2013 to 2016, running trials and writing technical publications. She has had various roles in the meantime including Project Manager of a research project at the University of Bristol looking into antimicrobial resistance in the bacteria on dairy farms.

She loves working with data and is now involved in several projects at Kingshay including our antimicrobial reporting work. In her spare time, Emma is the current Chairman of Somerset Grassland society.



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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

Sourcing Borrowing



August Checklist



Achieving Milk from Forage



Contract Heifer Rearing



## WE ARE ATTENDING



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

## The Dairy Show 2024

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

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