

TB Knowledge Exchange Day 2024

On Wednesday 4th December 2024, the Kingshay team travelled up to Sixways Stadium in Worcester for the TB Knowledge Exchange Day hosted by the TB Advisory Service (TBAS). The event welcomed delegates from across England who are part of the TBAS delivery team with veterinary practices, including vets, TBAS advisers, ATTs, Vet Techs and practice support staff as well as representatives from Defra, APHA, TBAS and NFU. Delegates heard from speakers on a variety of topics, including the APHA process once a TB reactor is disclosed on farm in England, on farm decision making around more sensitive testing, grant opportunities to help fund biosecurity and cattle vaccination and DIVA test.

Rebecca Girsty, from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) opened the event with an overview of the current skin test used on farm, highlighting that if an animal is disclosed a skin test reactor, it is highly likely to be truly infected with bTB. The skin test has a specificity of 99.98%, meaning that an average of one false positive result for every 5,000 uninfected cattle tested and a sensitivity of 80%, meaning the test may miss 1 in 5 infected cattle tested (or more). Delegates also heard from Dr AJ Coulter from Defra and Dr Maria Dominquez from APHA, with an update on developing a cattle vaccine and a companion DIVA test. The candidate CattleBCG vaccine is the same vaccine used to protect people and badgers from TB, however, it cross-reacts with the official tuberculin skin test and is not an authorised veterinary medicine. The Animal and Plant



Left to Right: Emma Puddy, Helen Frost, Kate Butler, Molly Lee and Lucy Hicks.

Health Agency (APHA) have identified a candidate skin test which does not cross react with the CattleBCG and aims to detect infected animals among vaccinated animals (DIVA test). Phase 3 field trials aim to begin in 2025 with the key message being that the UK is closer to being able to vaccinate cattle across England and Wales than ever before, but there is still more work to do.

Dr Christoph Egli, from IDEXX, shared details on the IDEXX TB ELISA test alongside Sam Bowker from Blackdown Farm Vets who shared ideas regarding on farm decision making around more sensitive testing. Charles Bentley, from ADAS, highlighted that although there are no current grants available, schemes such as the calf housing & welfare, slurry infrastructure grant, farming equipment and technology fund and countryside stewardship capital grant schemes have been available to support with the implementation of many biosecurity measures that can be recommended as part of a TBAS visit.

Continued overleaf...



Written by Kate Butler,
Kingshay Projects Specialist
TBAS Project Manager

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TBAS is currently in the fourth year of project delivery, offering free, bespoke, practical and cost-effective advice to all eligible farmers in England to help reduce the risks associated with bTB. The project is funded by Defra but delivered by trusted independent farm vets and day to day management of the project is delivered by Sarah Tomlinson, Kingshay Veterinary Consultant and Kate Butler, Kingshay Projects Specialist. The event highlighted the successes of the TBAS project, including the training of over 400 veterinary advisers, from over 140 practices across 48 different counties in England to deliver the service to their clients. Over 2,400 initial on farm bTB biosecurity visits have been delivered to date,

achieving a 99% satisfaction rate from keepers that have responded to the survey.

Towards the end of the day, delegates were asked 'What word, words or phrase best describes what you think farmers are getting out of TBAS?'. Responses from the audience included reassurance, hope, support and clarity as well as knowledge, education and awareness. If you are interested in receiving free bTB biosecurity advice, either over the phone or through an on-farm visit, please contact your private vet or the TBAS team on 01306 779410 or email info@tbas.org.uk.



Written by Kathryn Rowland,
Senior Farm Services Manager

Dairy Manager Update

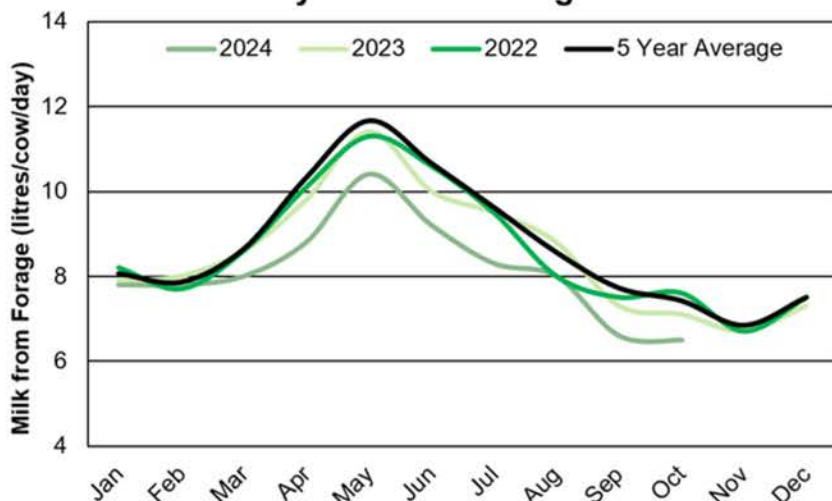
The latest results from herds using Kingshay's dairy costings service are showing milk from forage was lower than last year as forage quality is falling short for some herds.

For October 2024, milk from forage (MFF) was down by 7% to 6.5 litres/cow/day. Herds were fed more purchased feed to keep yields up as shown by conc. use increasing by 7% that month. Fortunately concentrate prices per tonne were 7% lower at £305/tonne compared to Oct 2023. All purchased feed costs/litre dropped by 2% to 12.2ppl, even though usage had increased.

Monthly Results	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
Milk Yield (l/cow/day) Change on last year	↔ 25.5 0%	↑ 25.8 2%	↑ 26.3 3%
Milk from Forage (l/cow/day) Change on last year	↓ 7.6 -13%	↓ 6.6 -9%	↓ 6.5 -7%
Milk Price (ppl)	41.1	42.9	44.4
Concentrate Use (kg/cow/day)	8.3	9.2	9.6
All Purch. Feed Costs (ppl)	10.9	11.9	12.2
MOPF (£/cow) Change on last year	↑ £193 17%	↑ £202 31%	↑ £228 36%

Source: Kingshay Dairy Manager

Monthly Milk from Forage Trends



Is there less focus on improving feed efficiency this year? Are cows simply being fed more as bought in feed is cheaper?

October 2024 milk prices averaged 44.4ppl, an increase of 19% compared to the same month of the previous year where prices averaged 37.2ppl.

Overall, margin over purchased feed (MOPF) per cow was 34% higher at £228/cow, due to higher milk prices, compared to £172/cow in Oct 2023.

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Written by Sarah Bolt,
Technical Knowledge Exchange Manager

"IN MY FIELD"

Nutrient Management Planning: It's never too early to start...

The Farming Rules for Water have been in place since 2018, yet it appears that non-compliance is still a cause for concern for the Environment Agency, who recently shared that 'a lack of recent soil testing and no nutrient management plan' are among the top breaches under this regulation. Whilst the repercussions are typically not punitive, the required actions to meet regulatory standards can be extensive. *If you were to get an inspection next week, would you be compliant?* See our recent Kingshay publication [Preparing for Environment Agency \(EA\) Inspections Workbook](#) for more information.

There is more to nutrient management planning than regulatory compliance:

Cost Savings: Optimising fertiliser use reduces waste and cuts input costs by making the most of on-farm nutrients like slurry and FYM.

Environmental Protection: Prevent over-application of fertilisers to minimise nutrient loss, reduce leaching, and prevent water pollution.

Improved Yields: Matching crop nutrient needs with supply ensures healthy growth, boosting productivity and profitability.

Sustainability: Maintain soil health and fertility long-term by managing nutrient balance and reserves effectively.

Data-Driven Decisions: Soil and slurry testing alongside record-keeping help refine strategies and adapt to changing conditions, ensuring efficient farming.

A nutrient management plan isn't just a good practice - it's essential for profitability, environmental stewardship, and future-proofing your farm. If you don't know where to start with yours - contact us via consultancy@kingshay.co.uk or **01458 851555**.

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Written by Kathryn Rowland,
Senior Farm Services Manager

Cost of Production Focus Vet & Med Spend - Investment or cost?

How do you view your vet? As an investment or the last resort?

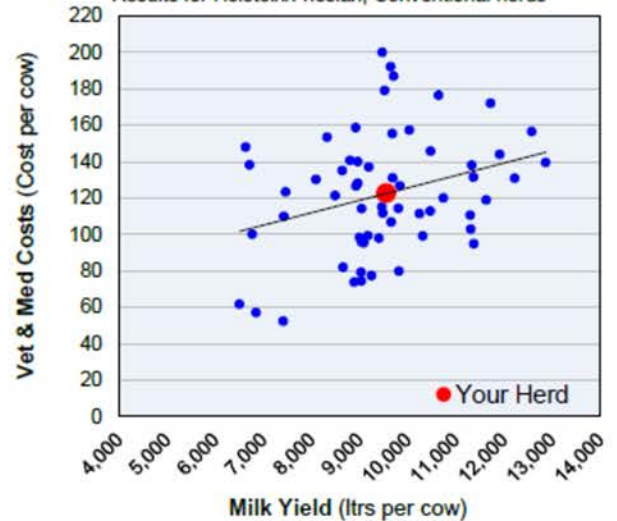
Results from Kingshay's Health Manager service, illustrate how average vet & med costs have risen from £73 per cow (or 0.9 ppl) in 2020 to £111 per cow (or 1.2 ppl) year ending March 2024, but still only account for 6% of variable costs.

Over this time herd size has also increased and average milk yields have risen to 8,441 litres per cow, but mastitis & lameness cases have also reduced during this period, as well as overall antimicrobial usage.

When analysing your vet & med costs:

- Be aware of vet costs in terms of both ppl and £ per cow
- Compare to herds on a similar production system
- Look at the vet costs and replacement costs together
- Break the vets bill down into preventative spend and firefighting costs
- Proportion costs to significant diseases. How much do you spend on mastitis, lameness etc. and also fertility? How do you control these issues? If you spend lots on mastitis but still have lots of cases and a high cell count, there is a problem to address. Sort out this problem and the vets bill will fall, production will improve and the dairy enterprise will benefit.

Milk Yield v Vet & Med Costs (Cost / Cow)
Results for Holstein/Friesian, Conventional herds



Analyse your Vet & Med spend
with Kingshay's Health Manager

Vets want to be involved with keeping herds of cows healthy and have an interest in ensuring that vets bills are an investment rather than a drain on dairy herd performance. The benefits from management of dairy cows to reduce loss of production and premature culling due to disease will far outweigh the savings from reducing the time of a good vet on farm or sourcing medicines with a few % extra discount.

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KINGSHAY NEWS

Welcome to the team Lucy Hicks

Lucy joined the team in September this year as Services Support & Marketing Coordinator. Lucy studied for 3 years to achieve her BA (Hons) Graphic Media and Communications degree, in Taunton. She has spent the last 7 years working in the retail sector, rising from Team Member to Management and is keen to finally be putting her degree to good use. Lucy is looking forward to learning more about farming and agriculture whilst at Kingshay. Outside of work, Lucy loves to spend her weekends riding her horse and socialising with friends.



COMING SOON...

Kingshay's annual *Dairy Antimicrobial Focus Report* for 2024.



Dairy Insight series on **Succession**, published throughout 2025.

Trophy for Best Ruminant Dissertation

For many years Kingshay has sponsored the trophy and prize for the best dairy-related ruminant dissertation at the Royal Agricultural University.

This year the prize was awarded to Rogan Van Niekerk, congratulations! We hope to share Rogan's study with our members as part of our Research Insight publication series.



30 Years at Kingshay...

We're thrilled to celebrate Richard Simpson, our Development Director, on reaching an incredible milestone—30 years with Kingshay. Richard joined us in 1994 as a Technical Specialist, and his unwavering passion for the industry has been a driving force behind his remarkable journey to becoming our Development Director.

Over the past three decades, Richard has played a pivotal role in shaping our business, leading the development of industry-leading reporting systems. His commitment and leadership have also inspired and mentored many within our team, guiding them to achieve great things.

Richard, you should be incredibly proud of all you've accomplished. Here's to many more years of success and innovation. Well done Richard!



STAFF NEWS

New Arrivals...

It's been a busy few months in the office, with not one, but two new babies to celebrate!



Our Project Co-ordinator, Emily Bunn and her husband George welcomed their first child, Percy to the world in September.

Our Services Support & Marketing Co-ordinator, Hannah Burns and her husband Tom welcomed their first child, Alfie to the world in October.



Congratulations to you both and welcome to the world, Percy & Alfie!

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