

# News

*Providing practical support to professional producers*

## AMR – A KEY ISSUE FOR 2016 AND BEYOND

*“It is not difficult to make microbes resistant to penicillin in the laboratory by exposing them to concentrations not sufficient to kill them. There is the danger that the ignorant man may easily underdose himself and, by exposing his microbes to non-lethal quantities of the drug, make them resistant.”*

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has become a “catastrophic threat which could in 20 years see any one of us dying following minor surgery,”** according to the Chief Medical Officer. This year has seen the fight against AMR promoted to the top of the agricultural political agenda, with moves such as Arla introducing its Arlagården quality assurance scheme for all its UK producers with restrictions on blanket dry cow antimicrobial therapy and, in the US, several multi-chain restaurants opting to only serve meat which has never undergone antibiotic treatment.

AMR is believed to occur when genetic mutation in a microbe means that it cannot be killed by a prescribed therapeutic concentration of a specific drug, but instead survives to multiply without competition from the susceptible microbes. The risk may be increased where microbes have been exposed to antimicrobials at concentrations lower than the therapeutic dose by, for example, failing to complete the full course or administering sub therapeutic levels due to inaccurate weight estimations, or by feeding waste milk to calves.

The dairy sector is unlikely to be the biggest contributor to the problem and some may think of any future legislation as unnecessary bureaucracy, however farms which adopt best practice will be doing themselves a favour in the long run. Do you find that each time your favourite cow gets mastitis, you find it harder and harder to treat and you're

Sir Alexander Fleming, Nobel lecture, 1945  
rapidly running out of options?

Top tips for making more informed treatment decisions include:

- **Lab testing** to identify the specific pathogens present in your herd and make sure you are administering the most effective drug. On-farm bacterial culture is gaining in popularity across the pond, so don't be surprised if you're brewing your own petri dishes in the not-too-distant future.
- **Analysing health records** in conjunction with your vet is a useful way of spotting trends and deducing whether a particular management change or treatment strategy is having the desired impact.
- It may be obvious but **following the instructions on the bottle** is critical! Calculate precise dosage rates and weights and stick with the treatment plan, even if you think she's well on the mend.
- Ensure antibiotics are used only when bacterial infection is likely – if in doubt, discuss this with your vet.

On a final note, **prevention really is better than cure** and early detection is the best form of attack. Boost herd immunity with good nutrition, reduced stress and vaccination. Exploit tools, such as mobility scoring and milk recording, and regularly appraise your system to identify the pressure points on your farm and nip the problem in the bud. Contact us for details of our HowsMyHerd service, providing low cost solutions to potentially high cost problems.

[www.howsmyherd.com](http://www.howsmyherd.com)

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A New Era at Kingshay

Welcome Back!

New Arrival!

In It To Win It

Coming Soon...

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Twice a month, Kingshay's farmer, consultant and vet members receive Farming Notes and a monthly checklist and have access to previous ones in the members' area of the website at [www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com). Here are some highlights from those produced in recent months:

**Teat Condition** - Maintaining good teat condition is a crucial line of defence against mastitis, as opportunistic pathogenic infection via the teat canal is one of the most common causes.

**Safe Handling & Storage of Fertiliser** - Good storage practices and vigilant record keeping are always important to ensure a safe workplace. In addition, they will assure the quality of the purchased products and minimise the potential for any deterioration.

**Selective Antibiotic Use** - Many assurance schemes are striving to prove agriculture is doing its bit to prevent antimicrobial resistance, but how can dairy farmers play their part?

**Reducing Mastitis Pressure in your Buildings** - Is environmental mastitis pressure in your cow housing too high for your parlour routine to fight?

# DAIRY MANAGER UPDATE

Since our last newsletter, milk from forage levels have continued to improve as producers try to improve efficiencies where possible and make the most of home grown conserved forages in rations. For October 2015, milk from forage was a staggering 41% higher than the same month last year with milk yields also 4% higher. These milk from forage figures are the best they have been over the last 5 years and look set to improve further into the winter months if the

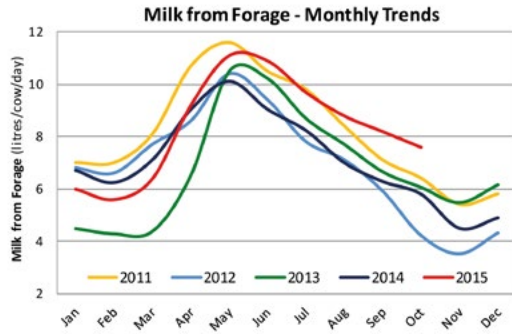
Monthly Results	Aug-15	Sep-15	Oct-15
Milk Yield (l/cow/day)	25.0	25.3	25.7
Change on last year	1%	2%	4%
Milk from Forage (l/cow/day)	8.8	8.1	7.6
Change on last year	23%	28%	41%
Milk Price (ppl)	24.2	24.6	25.1
Concentrate Use (kg/cow/day)	7.3	7.9	8.3
MOPF (£/cow)	£114	£112	£120

trend continues.

The graph shows how lower milk prices this year have encouraged producers to focus on exploiting the feed value of their home grown forages and grazing. Producers have closely evaluated rations and challenged their nutritionist to cut back on bought-in bulk feeds and supplements.

*Make the most of our special FREE silage analysis offer (see below).*

*Get your rations checked over - call the Tech Team today on 01458 851 555.*



# MAIZE MAKES LATE ARRIVAL

This year was a challenging one for maize growers, with a late spring and a cool, wet August meaning that sites all over the country were slow to dry down and late harvests frustrated many who were aiming to get the crop in the clamp in early October.

Average dry matter contents of our trial sites testing 29 varieties in Cheshire, Somerset and West Devon were lower than usual. Eyespot was seen more extensively than recent years due to the mild, wet autumn conditions. Good quality was still achieved by many varieties, but it took an extra month to get there.

Our results showed a wide range of yields from 4 tonnes DM/acre to 9.5 tonnes. The best variety delivered a value per acre of £370 better than the poorest performer, worth £18,500 to a producer growing 50 acres.

As part of a silage quality trial we are offering

## FREE SILAGE ANALYSIS

**Exclusively for members only**

The first 100 samples of each grass, wholecrop and maize silage will qualify for this offer

Call

# 01458 851 555

to order your sample packs

*Kingshay's Maize Variety Report will be published to members in January. Be sure to use it to select your varieties for next season together with the variety selector on our web site [www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com)*



**FARMING NOTES from Kingshay**

## GREEN MANURES & OTHER CROPS TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH

Part 4 of the Sustainable Soil Management Series

Soil health is vital to all crops and the International Year of Soils 2015 is placing a greater emphasis on improving productivity whilst reducing our environmental impact. Globally, 15 billion tonnes of soil is lost each year, the majority to water, but also to wind erosion as well as organic matter loss. The effects of soil degradation result in yield reductions, higher inputs, infrastructure damage and water treatment requirements. Eutrophication of waters in England and Wales is estimated to cost £800 million annually (DEFRA). These crops fit well in an arable rotation with a focus to improve soil health.

Growing green manures has been a traditional organic practice for centuries, but with the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, their use now is less common. Manures, could be a viable way to cut nitrogen (N) input costs for future crops as well as contribute to the new RPS 'Greening' requirements.

**What are green manures, are they different to other crops?**

Green manure crops can be categorised as:

- Spring sown for use in the summer (weed suppressors and organic material providers)
- Autumn sown for over-winter use to prevent soil erosion and N storing
- Longer term fertility improvements (grass and clover leys with strong aeration and water infiltration)

**Benefits of using green manures and cover crops**

Green manures are referred to as fertility building crops and may broadly be defined as crops grown to benefit soil health and productivity.

Different crops give different benefits, but if the most is to be made from a green manure, careful integration into the crop rotation is key, as well as consideration of the root structure of a green manure can bind soil particles, greatly reducing the loss of topsoil in run-off. Despite an average cost of £70/ha, benefits include:

- Improved soil structure through root penetration, dries, warms and aerates soil
- Increased soil organic matter and biological activity levels (soil health)
- Additional forage for livestock
- Weed suppression and blackgrass control
- Increases supply of nutrients available to plant and reduces nutrient leaching
- Soil erosion protection and pest control
- Mop up nutrients
- Significant amounts of carbon can be added with a grass/clover ley to an arable rotation

**SOIL MANAGEMENT LIVES!**

*Encourage your friends & neighbours to join - the more members we have, the more independent work we can do for you.*

## GOING OUT IN A GRAZE OF GLORY

**'If you'd told me a year ago we'd be able to full-time graze our whole herd all summer, I wouldn't have believed you. I wouldn't have wanted to risk the milk dropping, but it worked and we'll be doing the same next year.'** That's feedback from one member of the newly formed 'Tor Grazers' focus group at the end of their first season. Led by Kingshay consultant John Bennett, the Grazers committed to using a plate meter to record covers every week, with monthly meetings to discuss strategies for managing their grass at different stages of the season and benchmarking performance.

Despite all being within the same county, the group members found wide variances in grass growth

between farms throughout the season and proved for themselves that measured management of grass was key to success – all agreed that if they hadn't been measuring, they could not have responded.

The Tor Grazers used their Kingshay Dairy Manager Costings to compare production data to the previous grazing season. On average the group increased their April – Oct litres from forage by 22% and saved a heap of cash on bought-in feed. All the group members are looking forward to building on these results next season.

*To discuss your plans to drive down costs and exploit your grazing and forage better, call the Tech Team on*  
**01458 851555**



## NEW FORAGE COSTS REPORT

Forage is the core ingredient in ruminant diets that drives feed cost efficiency. Choosing the right crop, optimising yield, maximising quality and utilisation reduces the cost of meat and milk production.

Widely recognised across the industry as the bible of forage knowledge, the **Kingshay Forage Costings Report 2016** brings you the most up to date and comprehensive data on a huge range of forages. The report not only provides a detailed insight into the costs of each forage but also provides the reader with valuable information on crops for EFAs, cover crops and crops for soil improvement.

*The Kingshay Forage Costings Report is now available FOC to members and £80 to non members*



## A MOOVE TOWARD FLEXIBLE CUBICLES?

**Kingshay Cubicle Demonstration Unit Product List**

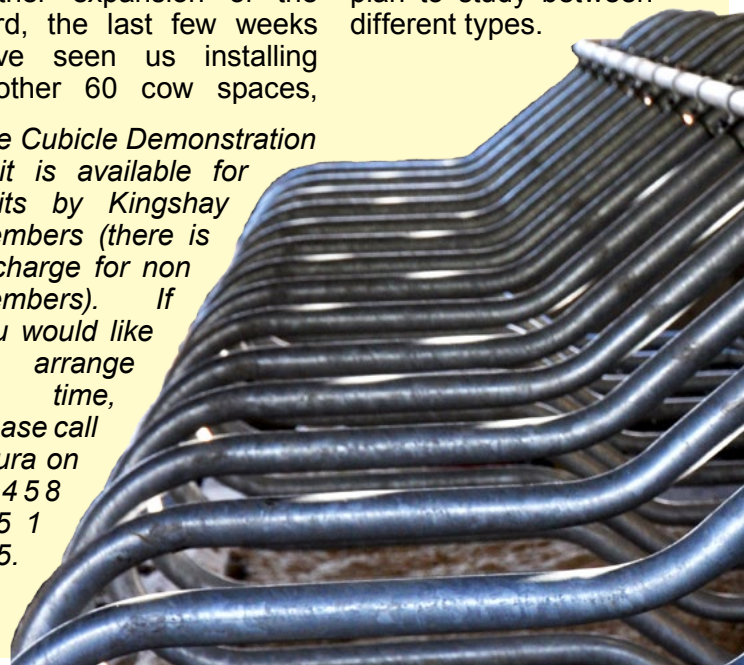
Company	Cubicle	Mat/Mattresses
Animal Comfort	Low Neck Rail High Neck Rail	Mattress Honeycomb Mat
Cow Comfort		Mayo Mats (24mm and 44mm)
De Boer Housing Systems Ltd.	Super Comfort 2D - Optima	Meadow Mat
Easyfix Rubber Products	Green CowSafe Green cubicle with rubber loop	Single Foam Mattress Double Foam Mattress
Kingshay	Our unique research-based design with patented 38° top rail (see picture, right)	
Kraiburg		KKM Wingflex
IAE	Super Comfort Supreme Cubicle	
Intershape	Clearview Cubicle Super Comfort	Softbed Mattress Pure Latex Cow Mattress
JFC	Deluxe Cow Cubicle	
Lely West NV	Commodus	
LM Bateman & Co. Ltd.	Parallel cubicle	
Quattro Products Ltd	Flexi cubicles	Luxury Mattress Rubber Comfort Mattress Mat
Regent Ingredients B.V		Supreme Comfort Mat
Spinder	Cosmos Cubicle	Meadow Original Mattress
Teemore Engineering Ltd	Deluxe Cubicle with and without zig-zag head rail Jourdain Cubicle	Louisiane Mattress
Wilson Agriculture	C50 Cowcoon	Pasture Mat (standard top cover) Pasture Mat (VRC top cover) Pasture Mat with Premium Pad

\*Products highlighted are included in the new expansion

Since the Kingshay Cubicle Demonstration Unit was set up in 2004 here at Bridge Farm, we have seen many visitors walk down its passageways, test its beds and discuss its findings with us, providing members with a unique resource to use before kitting out their own sheds. We extended it six years ago and now with further expansion of the herd, the last few weeks have seen us installing another 60 cow spaces,

with manufacturers keen to include their products in the facility. There has been quite a shift in style since 2009, with many of the new cubicles being partially, if not all, plastic, with a strong emphasis on flexibility. We look forward to reporting on these and other innovations from the new development and on the comparisons we plan to study between different types.

*The Cubicle Demonstration Unit is available for visits by Kingshay members (there is a charge for non members). If you would like to arrange a time, please call Laura on*  
**01458 851555.**





*Matt Dobbs is managing director of the Origin Group, which Kingshay has recently joined. Here we ask him about the group and how he sees Kingshay's role within it.*

### Who or what is the Origin Group?

Origin is an evidence-based business, serving the food-animal producing industry, delivering a range of veterinary, laboratory, research, consultancy, services and training to over 5,000 clients across all species. Between them, our clients care for over 800,000 head of dairy, beef and sheep, many millions of poultry and pigs. We also operate as a specialist diagnostics lab handling over 1.5m samples a year.

### What is your vision for the future of the group?

We aim to help agricultural businesses to deliver efficient, safe, nutritious and profitable food for a growing world by enhancing farmed animal health, welfare and production

There are many challenges for agriculture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, all of which offer opportunities for a dynamic progressive production animal health service business to provide support and solutions, including:

- Growing global demand for protein
- An ageing and more affluent population
- Climate change and care of the environment
- Intensification and larger herds/flocks
- Emerging disease threats for both animals and humans
- Growing public health issues – 85% of new diseases are zoonotic
- Antimicrobial resistance debate (AMR) – see front page article
- Resistance to parasite controls
- Impact of genetics and genomics
- The importance of evidenced based intervention - “big data”

- The application of new technology in livestock farming - “wearables”, 5G, etc

Our new group sets out to address the current fragmented nature of livestock agricultural businesses and the production animal veterinary industry.

### What does Kingshay bring to the group?

A key to modern production animal agriculture is to generate evidence that supports the management and monitoring of the unit. As our group grows, we hope to attract other businesses that can Measure, Manage and Monitor what happens on livestock farms. These businesses will include laboratories, research teams, consultancies, veterinary practices, agri-software, agriculture and medicine supply businesses and others that are highly valued in supporting agriculture .....and the first of those is Kingshay!

### Kingshay is proud of its reputation for being independent. Will it still be independent?

All of the businesses that join our group retain their strong connection with their customers. The key to this is to ensure the customer retains a strong association with the business, that the business retains its unique selling points, ethos and atmosphere. Retaining the existing business name and brand is very important.

For all of our businesses, retaining their independence will help to provide customers with the consistently high service they received before joining Origin.

### The Kingshay team are passionate about getting their technical information, research reports and services out to more producers. Will being part of Origin help them achieve this?

I have always been impressed with the services that Kingshay offer their members and the benefit they bring to UK agriculture. Through the Origin group we aim to extend these benefits both to more dairy farmers, but also to the pig, poultry and fish industries here in the UK and overseas.



The source of animal insight

## WELCOME BACK!

We are delighted to welcome back David Pettitt as Innovations Manager. Many of you will be familiar with David from his many years as a Kingshay consultant. After spending the last five years managing a 1,000 cow dairy business, David has returned to us to progress the new Agricultural Engineering Precision Innovation Centre project.



## IN IT TO WIN IT



Congratulations to William Blackburn in Lymm, Cheshire who was the winner of an iPad mini after completing the Kingshay Calf Jacket Survey.

## KINGSHAY WELCOMES CLA



Advising, representing and promoting owners of rural land, property and business in England and Wales, CLA are Kingshay's newest Corporate Members. Find them on our Corporate Directory [www.kingshay.com/directories/corporate-directory/](http://www.kingshay.com/directories/corporate-directory/)

## COMING SOON...

This year's **Maize Variety Trial Report**, featuring 3 sites and 29 varieties.

