



“Life is like a bus journey, what you see depends on which seat you are sat in.”

## WHO IS ON YOUR JOURNEY WITH YOU?

Few would question that a successful dairy farm requires a team effort. But deciding who is included in that team and how much information is shared, is not quite so straight forward.

The farm team should certainly reach beyond the farm gate, with the inclusion of your farm vet, nutritionist, consultant and even bank manager, foot-trimmer and the like. This wider team of key advisers, just like the farm team, have their own role to play which will impact on your farm and hence farming profitability. Incorporating these external associates in your team will be extremely constructive in ensuring a cohesive and interconnected approach to your business.

Every business needs a strong sense of direction and plans for the future. These are best laid out as written objectives, giving the farm targets and allowing staff to work towards goals. How many farms have written business objectives? If so, are they shared with the staff and wider team? If you do not have, or share business aims, how do the people working for you or advising you, know your direction of travel? Members of the team will inevitably have to make decisions. If objectives are shared, these day-to-day decisions are more likely to be in line with your way of thinking and goals will be easier to achieve.



Once you have shared your aspirations for your business, monitoring the journey is essential to give you an early warning of any deviations off the designated route. Firstly, decide what KPIs are the most suitable for your system and individual farm. Secondly, choose how you are going to measure them and thus monitor progress. Benchmarking farm performance using a costings service for example Dairy Manager, is a good way to track recognisable indicators, such as milk quality and yield or to monitor the effects of any changes on factors for instance milk from forage or MOPF. Sharing your herd performance and KPIs with all members of the team is essential. However, some members of the team may need to see these monthly, such as your herd manager and nutritionist, whilst sharing the same information with the wider team may only be necessary on a quarterly basis.



How you communicate with your team is key. Holding regular team meetings to discuss and review the business aims and objectives are a must for any modern dairy farm. This will ensure every team member is informed on how the business is performing and where it is going, improving communication will ultimately improve business performance.

With COVID restrictions, face to face meetings with your wider team have been made more difficult. As video meetings on-line become more popular for families across the country to keep in touch, consider using them for business purposes as well, they provide an effective alternative to meeting in person.

Kingshay has a range of tools and services to suit your monitoring needs, providing a suite of reports that can be particularly useful to discuss at team meetings, provide physical and financial KPIs on areas that the team can influence.

For further information on Holding Effective Meetings, whether face to face or on-line, see our relevant *insight* publications which are free to members, and available to purchase at [www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com).

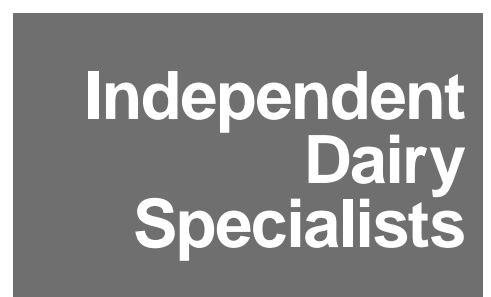
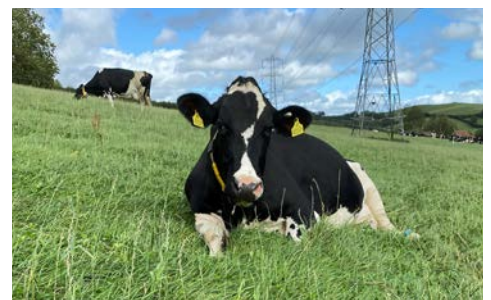


**Spending time looking at your business, away from the day to day rush will give you the perspective needed to aid long term success.**



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# SOUTH WEST DAIRY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE UPDATE

It has been a remarkable year so far, not just because of the noteworthy nature of the COVID pandemic. On a farming front, we started the year with a challenging wet early Spring delaying turnout, followed by one of the driest Mays on record. A total of 6-weeks with little rain was trailed by thunderstorms and heavy rain showers, all in all making for tricky grazing. Luckily, the weather seemed to have been back to "normal" for the latter part of the Summer and now providing us with a pleasant "Indian Summer" – this has meant that mid to late lactation cows are still making plenty of use of the grazing.



We are now in the midst of calving our Autumn group, it is going well, a reflection of a well-managed transition. The cows are housed on the transition diet for 3-weeks prior to calving, before moving to the sand bed for calving. Freshly calved cows are housed to ensure a stable ration and promote intake and peak yield.

Two batches of replacement cows have joined the herd and are settling in well – the first batch are averaging 38 litres.

Overall annual production stands at 8,448 litres a day per cow with a total of 4,167 litres from forage (49%). Production may be down on our target, but the cows are achieving 677 kg of MS per cow, well above our target of 650 kg.

## IS YOUR ON-FARM WATER SUPPLY SUITABLE?

It is important to test water quality for mineral content or pathogen levels which may cause problems with your livestock. High producing cows are particularly sensitive to poor water quality because of the amount of water they are required to consume daily.

We offer a separate microbial and mineral water analysis.

### WATER ANALYSIS SERVICES

- Microbial Water Analysis – £57 + VAT (Member price £48)
- Mineral Water Analysis – £52 + VAT (Member price £44)

## DISCOUNTED RATES FOR KINGSHAY MEMBERS

## ADVERTISING SPACE AVAILABLE

**REACH YOUR FARM CUSTOMERS ALL YEAR ROUND, 24/7 FOR LESS THAN £2.10 A-DAY!**



For more details email [sarah.bolt@kingshay.co.uk](mailto:sarah.bolt@kingshay.co.uk) or call 01458 851555.

## SORRY WE MISSED YOU...

Shows are a great way to interact with our clients face-to-face and to find out what everyone has been up to. We are sad to have missed UK Dairy Day and the South West Dairy Show, but given the current COVID-19 situation, it is understandable that these shows have not gone ahead. Do not forget we are always at the end of the phone to provide support, offer advice and answer any of your dairy manager queries.

We are also on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram so there are lots of way to see our latest updates or to get in contact with us.

## RECENT MAILINGS

Twice a month, Kingshay's farmer, consultant and vet members receive Insight publications 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:

## BIMODAL MILKING

Farmers aim for a quick efficient milking. *But can milking be done too quickly?* Explore the concept of bimodal milking and what practical actions you and your staff can take on farm to reduce it, whilst speeding up the milking process.





## DAIRY MANAGER UPDATE

Analysis of herds using Kingshay's dairy costings service for this quarter show milk prices are on the rise with the average figure of 27.3ppl for July 2020. However, these figures are still 3% lower than last year.

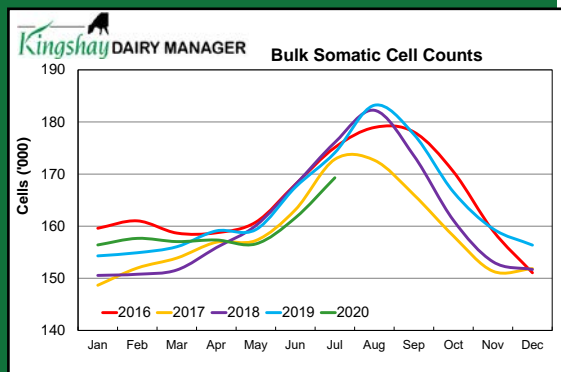
A decline in milk from forage over the last 3 months has also contributed to a lower MOPF.

Monthly Results	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
<b>Milk Yield</b> (l/cow/day)	27.7	26.7	26.0
Change on last year	0%	0%	1%
<b>Milk from Forage</b> (l/cow/day)	12.0	10.6	9.7
Change on last year	3%	-2%	-3%
<b>Milk Price</b> (ppl)	26.4	26.8	27.3
<b>Concentrate Use</b> (kg/cow/day)	7.3	7.4	7.3
<b>All Purch. Feed Costs</b> (ppl)	6.7	7.1	7.4
<b>MOPF</b> (£/cow)	£150	£136	£130
Change on last year	-4%	-6%	-9%

Margins per cow have decreased by 9% to £130 per cow compared to £139 in July 2019.

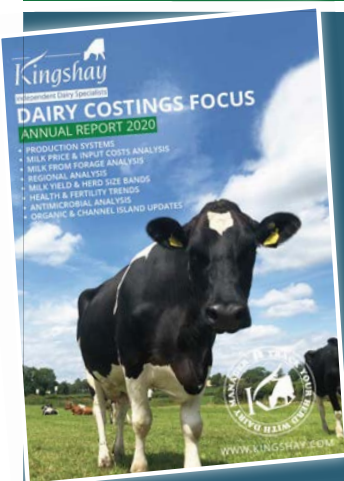
Bulk somatic cell counts were the lowest for 5 years since May at a level of 157, 162, 169 ('000) for May, June and July respectively.

Which is quite the difference from last year's dry summer peak in August where counts reached 183,000. The weather this year has been quite variable with a hot dry start to the season and a number of heavy storms scattered throughout. In hot dry summers you would expect a higher somatic cell count but producers may have actively removed older/trouble cows in order to reduce production during the pandemic, resulting in a reduced somatic cell count.



**How does your Somatic Cell Count compare?**  
Give the Dairy Manager team a call on 01458 851555 to discuss further.

Further monthly & rolling trends are available at [www.kingshay.com/dairy-costings/latest-results/](http://www.kingshay.com/dairy-costings/latest-results/)



## DAIRY COSTINGS FOCUS REPORT 2020

In July we released our ninth annual Dairy Costings Focus Report and this year we took a thorough look into production systems. The data showed lower input grazing focused herds coming out on top with a margin over purchased feed per litre basis, at 22.69p/litre, but the year-round calving, housing focused systems produced the best margin over purchased

feed per cow at £1,852/cow. Within each system a wide range is seen, for the year-round calving, housing focused systems, there was a range in margins of £2,219 per cow for the top 25%, to £1,465 for the bottom 25% – a huge difference of £150,800 for a 200-cow herd.

The important thing to note is that any dairy system can be profitable. It is not what you do, but how you do it with attention to detail across the board; from forage, to health, fertility and other inputs.

### HOW DOES YOUR HERD COMPARE?

To download your free copy of the Dairy Costings Focus Report please visit [www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com) or contact us directly for your free physical postal copy.

**Kingshay DAIRY MANAGER**



## CONGRATULATIONS TO BARBER'S CHEESEMAKERS

We would like to congratulate Barber's Cheesemakers who have been recognised for a 'Good Dairy Commendation Award' for animal health and welfare by Compassion in World Farming. Producers were required to monitor several key factors from mastitis cases to mobility scores. Kingshay have worked closely with Barber's Cheesemakers to create bespoke health reports. Having combined this with a second year of antimicrobial reporting, the addition of the new Health Report creates a great insight into the health and welfare of the animals on all their farms. Reports will be going out shortly and we are keen to see the producers' response.



Barber's Cheesemakers milk collection at the South West Dairy Development Centre



## MOTIVATING AND REWARDING STAFF

Labour is often one of the biggest sources of complaint on dairy farms. However, having a motivated team that works hard to achieve high levels of business performance ultimately comes down to making them feel valued and empowered.

## ROLE OF FAT SUPPLEMENTS

As environmental awareness is coming more prominent and rules and regulations are being created for farmers to reduce their environmental impact, lowering concentration of protein fed to cattle is worth considering, to benefit the environment but also increase protein efficiency in dairy cows.

Feedback on publications will be gratefully received, let Sarah know your thoughts on 01458 851555 or email [sarah.bolt@kingshay.co.uk](mailto:sarah.bolt@kingshay.co.uk)

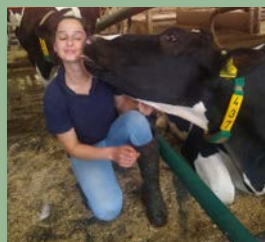
## WELCOME TO THE TEAM



### LARA BROWNE

Lara Browne joined Kingshay in July for a 40 week placement, as part of her sandwich year for her degree at the University of Reading, where she is studying Agricultural Business Management. She is joining the team as a technical and service assistant, writing insights and checklists for the membership and getting involved with Dairy Manager. When not at university she helps out at her family dairy farm in Wiltshire. After her placement she is hoping to go traveling, then work a calving season in New Zealand for a couple of months.

### SOPHIE CALCOTT



Sophie joins our team at the SWDDC as Assistant Herdperson. Since studying a Diploma in Work Based Agriculture, Sophie has been gaining practical experience working as a farm worker and calf rearer on a farm with a rotary parlour. She is keen to learn how the robots work in our system. Sophie recently qualified in AI and is motivated to improve her conception rates. In her spare time Sophie enjoys spending time with her horse.



### "IN MY FIELD" WITH MIKE FENELEY

During the course of my work as an agricultural business consultant, I deal with all of the main sectors of agriculture including dairy, beef, sheep, pigs, arable and diversification enterprises. At this present time there is a common thread occurring, as many of these businesses are looking to the future and trying to plan, with a far-reaching changed post Brexit agricultural support system in place. We are all reading about changes to the Basic Payment Scheme, Countryside Stewardship and the introduction of the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), and may be left feeling slightly confused (not unreasonably!) by it all, and how to proceed forward.

In many cases I am working with the businesses to design a farming system that makes the most of their strengths in agriculture, whilst also making the most of any support schemes that are available.

With the uncertainty that exists within the agricultural sector due to support measure changes, one thing that seems to be coming to the forefront is making sure the business has financial resilience in these unprecedented changing times. It is important to ensure when working together with my clients that they do not lose focus on their core farming activities. It is still as important as ever to measure both technical and financial performance and analyse these results to plan the best way forward, concentrating on areas of strength, and managing areas of weakness. This involves detailed discussions about where the business is at the present time and putting together a realistic business plan that can achieve the farm's and therefore the family's goals. Although the various subsidy schemes available can be very tempting, there is often a compromise that has to be made between adapting your farming system to suit these new schemes. It is vital to not impair the overall farming performance when taking on these policies, so that there is an overall net gain in performance achieved.

As ever it is important to plan ahead to ensure that the business is viable, achieves the technical and economic goals that the family needs/wants to achieve, and provides a robust plan that has resilience built into it. The addition of support schemes built into a business plan can be a useful improvement, but as the COVID lock down has shown, and as I have found with some of my clients some forms of diversification have as much risk attached to them as the core farming business activities. Make sure that planning for the future is part of your agricultural day, not something that happens by accident.

#### Mike Feneley

Independent Consultant & Kingshay Associate Consultant - Covering the South of England

07974 707317

Mrfeneley@gmail.com



## HAVE YOU ANALYSED YOUR SILAGE YET?

inform your decisions...  
get your silage analysed  
to maximise production  
all year round



### CONTACT US:

[www.kingshay.com](http://www.kingshay.com)  
[contact.us@kingshay.co.uk](mailto:contact.us@kingshay.co.uk)  
01458 851555

Bridge Farm  
West Bradley  
Glastonbury  
Somerset  
BA6 8LU



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