



# CHAVEREYS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & FINANCIAL ALCHEMISTS



## Monthly Farming Update

May 2025



## Policy issues

1. The politicians have been on their Easter holidays!

## Reform

1. Nothing to report, which is sad!

## Grants/regulations/legislation/environment

1. The Government Office for Science, Defra and the Climate Adaptation Research and Innovation Framework have developed a new report identifying the research and innovation needed to support the UK to adapt effectively to climate change.
2. Scientists at the Forest Research agency have used laser detection and satellite imagery to map England's non-woodland trees for the first time, revealing that these trees make up almost a third of the country's tree cover.
3. Defra is to extend the ban on burning heather on deep peat from 220,000 ha to 368,000 ha. Further, deep peat has been redefined as having a depth of 30cm rather than the current 40 cm.
4. The Woodland Trust has launched a £3 millions appeal to buy and restore over 100 acres of temperate rainforest, Buckland Wood in Devon's Dart Valley.
5. The British Beekeepers Association has launched its annual swarm savers initiative with trained beekeepers across the country ready to rescue and rehome Honey Bee swarms without charge. Up to 80 per cent of swarms perish if they don't find a suitable home.
6. Using DNA analysis, the National Bee Unit has confirmed that, for the first time, the Asian hornet has overwintered in the UK.
7. During April, a nest of an Asian hornet was destroyed in Langley, Kent and there have been confirmed sightings in Ramsgate and Deal in Kent, Appledore in East Sussex and Marshwood in Hampshire.
8. By 11 April, Jersey had trapped 262 Asian hornets, up 1,090 per cent on the same point in 2024.
9. A four-yearly review of Welsh water regulations has made 5 key recommendations:
  - Better targeting of regulations towards polluting activities while reducing burdens on low-risk farming.
  - Improving accessibility and clarity of regulations for farmers.
  - Exploring alternative measures, particularly regarding closed periods and the 170kg nitrogen per hectare manure limit.
  - Supporting innovation in farming practices.
  - Addressing regulatory gaps, including soil protection measures and nutrient management planning.

10. Defra has committed a total of £45.6 millions to three funds for new inventions and technologies. The Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies competition opened at the end of April with a total of £20.5 millions available. The fund will support farmers looking to test new technologies on their own farms and bridge the gap between innovation and real-world application. On 5 May, two further competitions opened under the Farming Innovation Programme. £12.5 millions is available to support collaborative research into ways to reduce on farm emissions while a further £12.5 millions will fund research and development using precision-bred crops to improve yield, reduce chemical inputs and enhance disease resistance.
11. Brighton and Hove city council is to inoculate about 1,400 historic elm trees with DutchTrig, a vaccine which contains a type of fungus which induces a defensive response against the disease spread by the elm barn beetle.

### **Other matters of farm finance and tenure**

1. According to the British Retail Consortium, food price inflation climbed to 2.6 per cent in April, up from 2.4 per cent with fresh food inflation up from 1.4 per cent to 1.8 per cent.
2. The National Association of Agricultural Contractors has forecast that contracting charges will increase by an average of 5.7 per cent in 2025.
3. According to Carter Jonas, average farmland values across England and Wales grew by 0.9 per cent in the three months to March to £9,811 per acre. While arable land values rose by 1.5 per cent, they remain 3.5 per cent below the 2016 peak whereas pasture land is now 4.5 per cent above its peak.
4. The Agricultural Price Index for outputs for February increased by 5.5 per cent, compared to a year earlier, and by 2.2 per cent compared to January. The index for inputs decreased by 1.3 per cent, compared to a year earlier, but increased by 0.7 per cent compared to January.
5. According to the Council for the Protection of Rural England, over 1,700 farms on the edges of towns and cities in England, equating to 56,000 ha, have been lost to farming.
6. Baroness Minette Batters has been appointed by Defra to lead a review of farm profitability. Her work will be supported by a new Profitability Unit within Defra.

## Product prices

### A. Market background

1. Sterling weakened significantly against the Euro but gained against US Dollar this month. Having opened the month at 83.6p per Euro, Sterling fell in the first half of the month to a low of 87.2p, whilst a partial recovery in the latter weeks led to a late close of 84.9p per € (1.3p weaker). Against the US Dollar, Sterling was far more volatile; opening at 77.2p, it rose to 76.0p and fell to 78.6p in the opening weeks, before improving for the remaining weeks to reach a late April close of 74.6p per \$ (2.6p stronger).
2. The gold price continues to rise, albeit with increased volatility, on the back of global unease, particularly the 'Trump effect'. Opening at £2,419 per troy ounce, the price fell back to £2,326 early on, then rose to a peak of £2,611 (the new 'all-time high' which only a year earlier was £1,938) before relaxing to a late month average of £2,476 per troy ounce, up £57.
3. Crude oil prices rose marginally early on and, after a sharp fall and a partial recovery, levelled off for the remainder of the month to sit significantly lower overall in late April. Brent Crude opened at \$73.25 per barrel, peaked at \$75.02 and fell to \$58.21, then spent the latter half of the month oscillating between \$64 and \$68, eventually reaching a late month average of \$65.02 per barrel, down \$8.23.

### B. Crops

1. The cereals market closed down again this month. Pricing on the global and domestic stages came under pressure from the growing hope for a Russia / Ukraine solution and the resulting potential unlocking of Russian exports; rain in the US wheat belt easing crop stress (but delaying maize planting); and a flat global demand. The US tariff debacle remains a watchpoint. Feed wheat futures closed marginally lower in the short term and flat longer term; by late April deliveries for November 2025 and 2026 were £185/tonne (-2) and £193/tonne (-) respectively. The oilseed rape market closed higher, reflecting the increase in vegetable oils in general. Demand remains robust from continental Europe, whilst expectation for 25/26 oilseed cropping in Ukraine is down more than 10 per cent, adding pressure to the supply / demand dynamic. Average spot prices in late April (per tonne ex-farm): feed wheat £166 (-1); milling wheat £181 (-3); feed barley £156 (+3); oilseed rape £448 (+8); feed peas £203 (-13); feed beans £213 (-4).



### C. Livestock

1. The average live-weight cattle prices for steers and heifers remained comparatively flat this month. The average steer price, from its opening average of 383p/kg lw, rose to a peak of 391p/kg where it remained until relaxing last thing to close at 387p/kg lw (up 4p, to sit 116p/kg above the average a year earlier). The average finished heifer price moved in a similar way; from its opening position of 394p/kg lw, it hit an early peak of 403p/kg, then relaxed to a closing average of 397p/kg (up 3p, to sit 126p above the average a year earlier). The average dairy cow price was unexpectedly steady this month; having fallen from its opening position of £2,071 to £1,834 in the early weeks it only moved by small margins thereafter, closing the month at £1,837 per head (down £234 overall to sit £590 above the prior year average).
2. The average finished lamb price (SQQ liveweight, old season) weakened significantly over the course of the month. Starting from an average of 345p/kg it fell back week on week to a late April average of 322p/kg (down 23p and 55p/kg below the average a year earlier).
3. The average UK standard pig price (SPP deadweight) improved by a reasonable margin this month. From an opening position of 204.4p/kg dw, it climbed steadily for most of the month before a final push leading to a late April average of 205.6p/kg, up 1.2p/kg overall, 5.1p/kg below the previous year.
4. The UK all milk price was largely level throughout February and March, reported in April, with a gain of 0.13ppl followed by a fall of 0.08ppl, bringing the March average to 46.01ppl – 7.88p above a year earlier and 8.64p above the 5-year rolling average. At the timing of writing, the most recently published final EU average farmgate milk price remains the December average (46.50ppl, up 0.55ppl and 5.14ppl above the average a year earlier).

### Other crop news

1. Latest forecasts from the European Commission suggest the average EU soft wheat yield this year will be 6.03t/ha, up from 5.54t/ha for the 2024 harvest. The barley yield is expected to be 5.08t/ha, up from 4.82t/ha in 2024.
2. During February, the UK produced the lowest output from the starch and bioethanol sectors in over 3 years, at just 44,500 tonnes. ADHB has revised its estimate for total wheat used by the human and industrial sectors in 2024/25 to 7.135Mt, down by 108Kt and 386Kt down on 2023/24. The estimate for maize usage has also been revised downwards, by 102Kt to 1.007Mt but is still 86Kt higher than 2023/24.
3. The US Department for Agriculture has reported that world maize ending stocks for the 2024/25 season will be 287.7Mt, down 1.3Mt from its March estimate.

4. The US Department for Agriculture has reported, that, as at 6 April, 48 per cent of the winter wheat crop was rated as good or excellent, compared to 56 per cent a year earlier, while 21 per cent was rated as poor or very poor compared to 12 per cent. However, drought conditions are reported to be spreading across the winter wheat belt. As at 1 April, 37 per cent of the area was affected.
5. AHDB has reported that trial plots in the North of England are showing signs of yellow rust on almost all varieties classified as resistant at the young plant stage while varieties classified as susceptible to the disease are relatively clean. Concern has been expressed that there may be a significant new strain or strains which have not been seen before.
6. The Agricultural Price Index for February shows increases of 6.7 per cent for wheat, compared to a year earlier, 24.2 per cent for oilseed rape and 1.5 per cent for fresh fruit but there were falls of 8.4 per cent for barley, 39.8 per cent for oats, 29.8 per cent for potatoes, 2.4 per cent for forage plants and 12.3 per cent for fresh vegetables. Compared to January, there were increases of 0.5 per cent for wheat, 1.7 per cent for barley and 1.4 per cent for forage plants but falls of 3.2 per cent for oats, 2.3 per cent for oilseed rape, 0.6 per cent for vegetables and 4.9 per cent for fresh fruit.
7. Including the latest information from the Pea Yield Enhancement Network, the Pea Growers Research Organisation has published the Pea Growth Guide.
8. Rijk Zwaan has opened a new seed processing facility in De Lier, increasing the capacity for seed cleaning, processing, storage and packaging of seeds.
9. A study by Green Alliance has revealed that the intake of fruit and vegetables would need to increase by 86 per cent for Britons to meet health advice to eat five portions a day. At present only a third achieve the target. Meeting this goal could add £2.3 billions to the economy, even more if the level of home-grown produce was increased. It would support 23,520 extra jobs and add 3 per cent to farm incomes.
10. The World Apple & Pear Association has reported that apple stocks at 1 February were down 4 per cent, or 154,000 tonnes, to 3,028,976 tonnes compared to a year earlier. The largest falls were in the Czech Republic, Austria, Belgium and Poland. However, in the UK, stocks were 34.7 per cent higher at 78,880 tonnes with sales to date down 800 tonnes. Pear stocks were down 1.4 per cent at 404,116 tonnes, with the largest falls in the Czech Republic, Belgium and the Netherlands. UK stocks were up 29 per cent at 5,863 tonnes.
11. Antobot has announced the global expansion of its uRCU® universal Robot Control Unit, the world's first embedded AI and controls unit for Agri-Robots.

12. Trees of Cornishgold, an historic juicing and cooking pear variety which has been revived by Frank P Matthews Ltd, will be available this autumn to commercial growers.
13. Thatchers Gold has planted 13,000 apple trees on a new 5-acre orchard in Somerset. The varieties planted are Red Windsor and Katy.
14. Agrii has entered into an agreement with RapidAim, an Australian AgTech company focused on insect management, to use its pheromone-based system in the UK for the detection of codling moth in apple orchards.
15. NIAB, working with Overland Ltd, following initial research carried out by the Interreg project, Horti-blue C, has revealed that, where coir bags used for strawberry production were directly replanted by removing the original plants and planting fresh plants into the same planting hole, provided the coir was devoid of pathogens, Junebearers showed no loss in yield although everbearer varieties recorded a loss of 6-7 per cent. Overland Ltd has developed an automated process to recycle coir from bags followed by the removal of plastic, plant leaves, roots and crowns to leave clean coir.
16. A consortium led by InnPhyte Consulting Ltd, in collaboration with FlexFarming and NIAB, is pioneering an innovative approach for commercial Totally Controlled Environment Agriculture for strawberry production. It aims to enhance productivity, optimise resource use and improve profitability for soft fruit businesses.
17. The British Tomato Fortnight Campaign will run from 2 to 15 June.
18. The NIAB Fruit Annual Review 2025 has been published and is available on [niab.com](http://niab.com).
19. The Good Eating Company has opened a new restaurant, The Orangery, off London's Tottenham Court Road, which features what it claims is the largest on-site hydroponic farm in London. In partnership with Square Mile Farms, the restaurant can produce the same yield as 1.1 acres of traditional farmland and use 90 per cent less water. 35,000 plants will be cultivated with 70 per cent being consumed in the restaurant.
20. Jones Food Company, one of the UK's longest-running and largest vertical farm operators, has called in administrators. The company had sites in Scunthorpe and Lydney.
21. Driscolls has lost its case against California Berry Cultivars LLC, claiming that the defendant had improperly used its proprietary strawberry varieties in its breeding program.



## Other livestock news

1. The Animal and Plant Health Agency has conducted an assessment of the risk of the foot-and-mouth disease virus entering Great Britain over the 3 months from 3 April. The risk was assessed as 'medium' meaning that the virus is expected to arrive 'regularly' likely by means of commercial, personal or illegal trade in products of animal origin. As the virus is highly transmissible with an incubation period of between 2-14 days, the main concern is that it will spread to a virus-free area, and subsequently to Great Britain, before restrictions are implemented.
2. The Livestock Auctioneers Association has reported that, during 2024, 10.7 million cattle, sheep and pigs, comprising 6.7 million slaughter livestock and 4 million store and breeding stock, were sold through the live auction rings of England and Wales creating a turnover of £2.455 billions, up £220 millions on 2023.
3. During March, UK prime cattle slaughterings fell by 3.2 per cent, compared to a year earlier, to 168,000 head; beef and veal production fell by 3.7 per cent to 73,000 tonnes; sheep slaughterings fell by 1.9 per cent to 970,000 head; mutton and lamb production fell by 1.9 per cent to 23,000 tonnes; pig slaughterings rose by 6 per cent to 857,000 head; and pigmeat production rose by 6.9 per cent to 81,000 tonnes.
4. Following a further confirmed case of foot-and-mouth disease in Hungary, all imports of cattle, pigs and sheep and meat products from Austria have been banned.
5. Scientists at SRUC and the Moredun Institute have developed a new webtool which uses artificial intelligence to provide tailored advice on how to protect livestock from disease.
6. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust has added the Ancient Cattle of Wales to its watchlist in the 'priority' category.
7. Arla Foods and Germany's DMK Group are to merge thereby creating the strongest dairy co-operative in Europe. Arla Foods has 7,600 owners producing 13.7 billion kg of milk annually, DMK Group has 4,600 owners producing 5.3 billion kg.
8. During February, 1,106 million litres of milk were available to processors, down 6.4 per cent on January; liquid milk production fell by 8.5 per cent to 473 million litres; cheese production fell by 7.6 per cent to 39,900 tonnes; butter production fell by 1 per cent to 15,300 tonnes; but milk powder production rose by 11 per cent to 7,100 tonnes.
9. Freshways has reduced its price by 2ppl to 40ppl.

- 10.** Muller has acquired Biotiful Gut Health which produces a range of kefir and other fermented products.
- 11.** During March, average butterfat fell by 0.6 per cent, compared to February, and by 1.4 per cent compared to a year earlier, to 4.36 per cent. Average protein fell by 0.1 per cent, compared to February, but was unchanged compared to March 2024 at 3.41 per cent.
- 12.** The Agricultural Price Index for February shows increases of 30.6 per cent for cattle and calves, compared to a year earlier, 8.1 per cent for sheep and lambs, 18.6 per cent for milk and 3.3 per cent for eggs but there were falls of 4.8 per cent for pigs and 14.1 per cent for poultry. Compared to January, there were increases of 9 per cent for cattle and calves, 1.8 per cent for sheep and lambs, 2 per cent for poultry and 0.3 per cent for milk but a fall of 0.7 per cent for pigs.
- 13.** A report from the National Sheep Association has revealed that almost 90 per cent of sheep farmers have experienced a dog attack on their flock in the past year with 78 per cent being due to dogs not being on a lead. 43 per cent said sheep had to be euthanised after an attack.
- 14.** The Manx Loaghtan and the Leicester Longwood, both iconic native sheep breeds, have been placed on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Watchlist.
- 15.** In 2024, EU pigmeat production rose by 2 per cent, compared to a year earlier, to 20.6Mt. There were increases in production of 7.7 per cent in Poland, 1 per cent in Spain and 1.7 per cent in Germany but the Netherlands registered a fall of 5.2 per cent.
- 16.** The AHDB has facilitated the formation of the Roadmap Steering Group, comprising integrators, producers, industry bodies, an independent consultant and Red Tractor with a view to putting in place by the end of the year a roadmap to update pork levy payers on the environmental impact of pig farming.
- 17.** Cranswick's plans for a farm to rear 6 million chickens and 48,000 pigs each year at Methwold, Norfolk have been rejected by Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
- 18.** From 7 April, the avian influenza prevention zone housing measures have been extended to cover county Durham, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyneside. During April, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was confirmed in further premises near Thirsk in Yorkshire and Bishop Auckland in County Durham.
- 19.** During March, UK commercial layer chick placings fell 1 per cent, compared to a year earlier, to 3.2 million chicks; broiler chick placings were unchanged at 91.3 million chicks; turkey chick placings fell 12 per cent to 500,000 chicks; turkey slaughterings fell 19 per cent to 400,000 birds; broiler slaughterings rose 0.8 per cent to 88.8 million birds; and total poultry meat production fell by 1.3 per cent to 147,700 tonnes.

20. In the 3 months to March, 255 million dozen eggs were produced in the UK for human consumption, up 2.7 per cent on a year earlier and up 1 per cent on the December 2024 quarter. The average farm-gate price was 148p per dozen, up 3.5 per cent and 1 per cent respectively. The production of egg products was 17,000 tonnes, down 7.9 per cent on a year earlier but 19 per cent up on the December quarter.
21. United Auctions, the Scottish livestock auctioneers, has become an Employee Ownership Trust.

## VIII Inputs/Supply businesses

1. The Health and Safety Executive has extended glyphosate's authorisation until 15 December 2026.
2. During March, UK-produced ammonium nitrate with a 34.5 per cent nitrogen content rose by £13/t to £380/t compared to February. This is £41/t higher than the price last year. Imported product was £377/t, up £8/t on February and £35/t on last year.
3. The Agricultural Price Index for February shows falls of 2.6 per cent for seeds, compared to a year earlier, 5.7 per cent for energy and lubricants, 8.7 per cent for chemicals, 5.7 per cent for animal feedingstuffs and 0.7 per cent for buildings maintenance but increases of 3.4 per cent for fertilizers, 14.1 per cent for veterinary services and 5.2 per cent for equipment maintenance. Compared to January, there was a fall of 0.2 per cent for animal feedingstuffs but increases of 1.8 per cent for energy and lubricants and 3.9 per cent for fertilizers.
4. A report published by Growing Kent & Medway has revealed that co-operation between food producers, scientists and innovative bio-refinery businesses, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and construction businesses could benefit from crop waste materials such as pomace, peelings, trimmings and non-edible parts of plants. The waste materials can contain compounds which can be used as natural alternatives to chemical food additives and dyes, antioxidants to develop cancer-fighting drugs and sustainable construction materials and packaging.
5. A consortium including NIAB, The Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, Asplins Producer Organisation Ltd, The Summer Berry Company Ltd and Olombria has developed FLYTHRIVE (Fly-Led Yield Thriving in Horticulture with Integrated Vision and Ecology). The £1.3 million project, supported by Innovate UK, uses early automated detection of aphids on soft fruit with select hoverfly species. It aims to reduce aphids by 70 per cent within 2 weeks of deployment with active lures to monitor and detect at an early stage of aphid infestation.
6. Eurazeo, a capital investment company, has acquired a majority stake in Bioline Agrosciences.

## Marketing

1. In the period July to February, wheat imports totalled 2.16Mt, up 50 per cent on a year earlier and 75 per cent above the 5-year average. However, imports in February totalled 194.6Kt, the first time in the period they have been less than 200Kt. Maize imports in the period totalled 1.99Mt, 12 per cent up on a year earlier.
2. According to NIQ Homespan, volume sales of cow's milk fell in the year to 22 March by 1.9 per cent with a fall in value sales of 3.2 per cent. Both the semi-skimmed and skimmed registered falls but whole milk registered volume growth of 2.9 per cent.
  - Volume sales of cow's cheese increased by 4.5 per cent with spend up 2.8 per cent despite a fall in average prices of 1.6 per cent.
  - Volumes of cheddar increased by 5.8 per cent but sales of British regionals and Stilton and other blue cheeses fell by 1.2 per cent and 0.2 per cent respectively.
  - Volume sales of cow's butter fell by 2.5 per cent but spend increased by 2.9 per cent. Butter spread volumes fell by 6.1 per cent but block butter increased by 6.8 per cent. Volumes of plant-based spreads increased by 4.3 per cent.
  - Volume sales of cow's yoghurt, yoghurt drinks and fromage frais grew by 6.1 per cent with spend up 8.3 per cent, although fromage frais volumes were down 10.1 per cent. Fat free yoghurt grew by 7.2 per cent while plain yoghurt increased by 24.3 per cent.
  - Cow's cream volumes increased by 1.4 per cent with double and sour cream both up 6 per cent.
3. Latest data shows that, in the first 2 months of the year, UK food exports were 10.7 per cent higher than a year ago, with 70 per cent going to the EU. Meat exports rose by 5.9 per cent to £296.7 millions while dairy and egg exports rose by 13.8 per cent to £303.1 millions. Vegetable exports rose by 20.2 per cent and fruit and nuts by 12.7 per cent but cereals exports fell by 2.4 per cent. In the same period, imports rose by 4.4 per cent with meat up 3.3 per cent, dairy up 8.6 per cent and cereals up 7.1 per cent. Overall, the UK's food trade balance was a deficit of £5.7 billions with vegetables contributing £726 millions and fruit and nuts £910 millions.
4. In the 12 weeks to 23 March, Kantar has reported that spend on beef products increased by 4.4 per cent, compared to a year earlier, due to a 5.2 per cent increase in prices but a 0.8 per cent fall in volume sales. Primary beef volumes fell by 0.3 per cent although mince rose by 1.8 per cent, diced beef by 14.6 per cent and steak by 0.6 per cent. Processed beef volumes rose by 0.8 per cent with burgers and grills up 0.8 per cent and sausages up 19.3 per cent. Added-value products increased by 2.1 per cent with marinades up 12.1 per cent.

5. In the first 2 months of 2025, imports of beef totalled 47,000 tonnes, 13 per cent down on a year earlier. Imports from Ireland were down 16 per cent while imports from Germany fell by 81 per cent due to the foot-and-mouth trade restrictions. However, imports from Australia rose by 144 per cent to 1,200 tonnes with the majority being fresh/chilled boneless cuts. Exports in the period fell by 12 per cent to 20,600 tonnes but values rose by 12 per cent to £110 millions.
6. According to Kantar, in the 12 weeks to 23 March, volume sales of lamb fell by 16.9 per cent, compared to a year earlier, while spend fell by 12.7 per cent even though average prices had increased by 5 per cent. Primary lamb volumes fell by 24.5 per cent although diced lamb grew by 32.6 per cent and steak by 9.1 per cent. Processed lamb volumes fell by 6.8 per cent with burgers and grills down 7.2 per cent. Added-value volumes fell by 12.2 per cent with marinades down 32.7 per cent and sous vide down 8.2 per cent.
7. In the period January to February, imports of sheep meat rose by 12 per cent, compared to a year earlier, to 11,500 tonnes with New Zealand making up 7,000 tonnes and Australia 2,800 tonnes while imports from Ireland fell by 15 per cent to 1,500 tonnes. Exports were flat at 14,000 tonnes but values rose by 14 per cent to £102 millions.
8. In 2020, Aldi pledged to spend an additional £3.5 billions with British suppliers by the end of 2025. It has surpassed this target a year earlier than planned having spent over £14 billions with UK businesses in 2024.
9. The NFU Scotland ShelfWatch, which monitored more than 15,000 products on sale in 290 stores across the country, has found that just 17 per cent of all own-label products in supermarkets were actually produced in Scotland, although 63 per cent was sourced from the UK as a whole. Aldi came top in Scotland with an average of 40 per cent, followed by Lidl and Co-op, but Sainsbury's came bottom at 8 per cent followed by Asda at 10 per cent and Tesco at 11 per cent. Across the UK, Sainsbury's had the best average at 73 per cent while Aldi was bottom at 41 per cent.
10. Free-range poultrymeat producers and processors will no longer have to change how the produce is labelled when mandatory housing measures are introduced.
11. By the end of August, all Waitrose own brand chicken will meet the high standard of the Better Chicken Commitment.



- 12.** In the first six months of the British top fruit season, British Apples and Pears Ltd has reported on how the multiples are faring, compared to 2023/24 unless otherwise stated:
- Asda has doubled sales of apples in the past year to 8,079 tonnes.
  - Sales at Lidl are up by 2,225 tonnes, Sainsbury's by 2,189 tonnes and M&S by 1,090 tonnes.
  - Sales at Morrisons fell by 6,057 tonnes, only selling 3,457 tonnes in the period. Falls have also been recorded by Iceland and Co-op.
  - Aldi is the leader in sales with 16,918 tonnes followed by Tesco with 16,586 tonnes.
  - Sainsbury's is the lead buyer of pears at 3,221 tonnes, 33 per cent of the whole market, followed by Lidl at 2,289 tonnes.
  - Aldi has sold 19.1 per cent of all British apples and pears compared to its grocery market share of 10.3 per cent while Lidl has sold 16.5 per cent of the total compared to its grocery share of 7.3 per cent.
- 13.** The Co-op has announced it will only source British strawberries with effect from 19 April until the season closes.
- 14.** Dovey Native Botanical Gin, Pembrokeshire Native Oysters, Pembrokeshire Rock Oysters and Welsh Heather Honey have all been granted protected geographical indication status.

## Miscellaneous

- 1.** Fera Science Ltd has been awarded the Specialist Science and Contingency Services contract, covering a period of 5 years, by Defra, the Food Standards Agency and the Home Office. The contract covers a range of strategic science services, strengthening border security, protecting the natural environment and helping to ensure food safety, public and animal health.
- 2.** LAMMA has been named Best Tradeshow of the Year at the Exhibition News Awards.
- 3.** NFU Mutual has reported that 67 per cent of farm shops have been targeted by criminals in the past year with 50 per cent of those surveyed having been a victim of crime on more than 3 occasions.
- 4.** A survey of 2,000 people conducted by British Sugar has revealed that 70 per cent support gene editing to create a sustainable and resilient future for British farming.
- 5.** A Shakespeare Martineau survey, conducted before the Autumn Budget, has revealed that one in three farmers are concerned their business will fail if passed to their children, 42 per cent were worried their children would sell the business while 32 per cent would specifically exclude an heir from their will if they thought the farm would be sold.

6. A new survey covering 569 Scottish farmers and crofters has revealed over one-third fell into the low wellbeing category. While it found that wellbeing increased with age, young respondents reported the lower scores.
7. A retired farmer and now an unpaid lay Church of England minister and agricultural chaplain has reported that, since the Autumn Budget, calls from concerned farmers have more than tripled.

## Postscripts

1. A woman telephoned her husband at work and asked him to buy some organic vegetables on his way home. The husband arrived at the farm shop and began to look for organic vegetables. He couldn't find any so asked a shop assistant where they were. The assistant didn't know what he was talking about so the husband said, "These vegetables are for my wife, have they been sprayed with poisonous chemicals?" The assistant replied, "No, you will have to do that yourself!"
2. I said to my farm worker, "You're lazy." "Me lazy?" he replied, "don't get me started."
3. A farmer was combining his wheat on a hot summer afternoon in August. Sadly, he ran over a very attractive Essex girl dressed in designer clothes and covered in expensive jewellery. There was so much mess it took the farmer two hours to sort the wheat from the chav.
4. A lady was sitting in a pub with a bottle of champagne. A man came into the bar, ordered a bottle of champagne and sat at the next table.

"Are you celebrating?" enquired the lady.

"Yes" the man replied.

"What a coincidence, so am I" she said. "What are you celebrating?" The man looked very happy. "I am celebrating because I am a poultry farmer and, after many years of trying, I am at last getting fertile eggs from my hens. What are you celebrating?" he asked.

The lady looked very happy too. "I am celebrating because after many years of trying, I am finally pregnant. What is your secret?" she asked.

"I have used a different cockerel," the farmer replied.

"What a coincidence – so have I" the lady replied.
5. My farm boss said to me one day, "I've been married 25 years and have only had one argument. It started on our wedding day and it's still going on today."

6. The farmer wasn't pleased with his brand new tractor. He was convinced it was dangerous, so he took it back to the dealership. The mechanic checked it over and on his written report just put the following:  
"The most dangerous part of this tractor is the nut that holds the steering wheel."
7. A fire was found to have been started deliberately. The farmer's wife telephoned the insurance company on the day and said "Our barn was insured for £30,000 and so we want to be paid out immediately."  
"It's not quite that easy," replied the man. "We firstly assess the value of your barn and provide a new one of comparable worth". "Well, if that's the case you can cancel the policy on my husband immediately!" she replied.

## Reverse the trend and get hands in pockets!

The Charities Aid Foundation 'UK Giving Report 2025' on the state of the nation's giving makes for rather sad reading. In summary:

- Despite the burgeoning population, donations and sponsorship levels are at the lowest levels since the report was first published in 2016 with 4 million fewer donors and sponsorships down by 6 millions. London is the first and only region where less than 50 per cent donate to charity.
- Those who do give are donating more, a total of £15.4 billions in 2024 with an average donation of £72.
- Only 36 per cent of 16-24 year olds donate or sponsor, the lowest of any age group, and down from 55 per cent in 2016.
- 43 per cent of donors gave £2.22 billions to hospices and medical research, the largest of any sector.
- One in ten people volunteered in 2024, down 1.5 millions on 2023.
- 3.9 million people cancelled a regular payment to charity in 2024.
- 29 per cent of those who had not donated cited a lack of interest in charities rising to 34 per cent of 16-24 year olds and 38 per cent of 25-34 year olds. Across all age groups the main reason given was affordability.
- While 57 per cent are happy to contribute to the salaries of front-line employees, only 25 per cent are content to pay for the salary of functions such as finance and HR and only 12 per cent are prepared to fund a chief executive.
- 77 per cent of donors 'always' or 'sometimes' use gift aid to support their donation but 24 per cent of young donors have little or no knowledge of the tax relief.

There always have been, always are and always will be financial pressures on one's pocket. But charities are the lifeline of many parts of society, be it people, animals or the environment. Without a vibrant charity sector, those areas which most need help with suffer the most.

Those who donate, spread the word to those who don't and point out that donating, even small amounts, can give a warm glow to not only the recipients but the donors too.

# Monthly Farming Update

We welcome feedback on the MFU.  
Does this issue raise any questions in your mind?  
Would you like more information on a particular item?

Please ring one of our agricultural specialists:

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If you would like to add a friend or colleague's name to the mailing list  
please contact Lindsay Glead.

The MFU was edited from 1991 to 2006 by John Nix, Emeritus Professor of  
Farm Business Management at Imperial College London.



## CHAVEREYS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS