



CHAVEREYS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & FINANCIAL ALCHEMISTS



Monthly Farming Update

April 2026

Policy issues

1. The Government has published The Land Use Framework for England. Relevant points are:
 - In area, 39 per cent of land is arable and horticultural; 16 per cent is semi-natural grassland; 15 per cent is improved grassland; 11 per cent is urban; 9 per cent is broadleaved woodland; 7 per cent is mountain, heath and bog; 2 per cent is coniferous woodland; and 1 per cent is coastal and water.
 - By 2050, 1 in 4 homes and 59 per cent of grade 1 farmland is projected to be at risk from flooding.
 - By 2030, improved coverage of up-to-date development plans and spatial development strategies will enable areas to plan for homes and development needed by communities.
 - By 2030, at least 95 per cent of electricity will come from clean power sources.
 - By 2030, farmers and land managers will have clarity on the long-term opportunities for their land and policy on food production.
 - By 2050, agricultural land will be managed to prioritise sustainable food production and environmental benefits. We will produce more of what we consume ... and farms will see more of the value.
 - By 2050, new wildlife-rich habitats will be delivered ... tree and woodland cover will have reached 16.5 per cent.
 - Analysis demonstrates there is enough land to deliver the objectives for nature restoration and development without reducing domestic food production.
 - There is a need to strategically conserve the agricultural land with the greatest long-term potential for food production.
 - Land has been categorised as regards change of use: 4 per cent of England and 5 per cent of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA), totalling 488,000 ha, has been designated primarily for food production but with some change for environmental/climate benefit. 6 per cent of England and 9 per cent of the UAA, comprising 788,000 ha, has been primarily designated to deliver environmental and climate benefits. 1 per cent of England and 2 per cent of the UAA, comprising 129,000 ha, will be used for solar and wind energy although there is a caveat that this may need to increase. 1 per cent of England and 2 per cent of the UAA, comprising 168,000 ha, will become used for development.
 - By 2030, the grassland area will have fallen to 29 per cent and arable and horticulture to 36 per cent. By 2050, grassland will be down to 26 per cent and arable and horticulture to 32 per cent.
 - The East of England is identified as the area where the opportunity for agroforestry is greatest. This is also the area at the greatest risk from climate change.
 - The North West, the South West and parts of the South East are identified as the areas best for habitat restoration and creation.

- There is a need to produce more food from less land using a mixture of productivity improvements and expansion of highly efficient sectors.
 - A portfolio of sector growth plans will be developed starting with horticulture and poultry.
 - Tenant farmers must have the rights and the certainty required to invest. The Law Commission will deliver an independent review of agricultural legislation.
 - A review will be undertaken of the benefits of land used for recreational shooting.
2. A report entitled Food for Thought – Shaping Sustainable Farming Futures, published by HCR Law, has suggested that British farming and food production is ‘at a crossroads’ as farm businesses are being constrained by Government policy on issues such as Inheritance Tax and planning regulations which make it difficult to diversify, poor labour access, geopolitical issues and supply chain structures.
 3. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee has questioned senior Defra officials about the department’s performance:
 - There has been an 8 per cent reduction in headcount since July 2024 and a further 5 per cent cut is planned for 2025/26.
 - Staff turnover was 10 per cent in 2024/25, partly due to uncompetitive salaries compared to the private sector.
 - There have been delays to the publication of major documents with the Farming Roadmap, the Land Use Framework and the Circular Economy Strategy all due to have been released in 2025 but are either awaited or late in delivery.
 - The committee has received reports of fragmented policy making, poor administration of funding schemes and larger operators having advance notice of schemes.
 4. The Government has revealed that it is working towards a mid-2027 start date for a new sanitary and phytosanitary agreement with the EU.

Reform

1. Data has been published on the uptake of agri-environment schemes in England at the end of 2025:
 - The total area covered by the various schemes is estimated at 6.1 million hectares, 69 per cent of the utilised agricultural area.
 - During 2025, the area increased by 9 per cent.
 - The area covered by the Sustainable Farming Incentive expanded offer increased by 350 per cent to 1.8 million hectares.
 - The area covered by the Countryside Stewardship scheme has fallen by 20 per cent to 1.6 million hectares.

2. Defra and the Rural Payments Agency have accepted that there is no mechanism for common land to enter either the Sustainable Farming Initiative or the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier schemes and there is no guarantee the situation will change in 2027.
3. The Scottish Government has published its Rural Support Plan covering the period 2026-2031. The Plan introduces a 4-tier framework:
 - Tier 1: Base – this will provide direct payments to support active farming. It will begin by using the existing Basic Payment Scheme but will change over time.
 - Tier 2: Enhanced – this will support farmers and crofters who provide climatic and environmental benefits.
 - Tier 3: Elective – this will provide support for action that creates and/or protects habitats or species or improves business sustainability.
 - Tier 4: Complimentary – this will help to grow skills and capabilities by providing training and advice.
4. The Welsh Government has published details of the Sustainable Farming Scheme:
 - There are 3 layers, Universal; Optional; and Collaborative.
 - The Universal layer, which will apply from 2026, is made up of 12 Universal Actions, all of which must be completed to obtain the Universal Payment, unless any Action is not appropriate to a particular farm.
 - The Optional and Collaborative layers will be phased in gradually.
 - Optional Actions will comprise: capital (production and efficiency); capital (environment); sustainable production; organic; developed sites; habitat review; temporary habitat; woodland management; woodland creation; small infrastructure; and infrastructure and equipment.
 - Collaborative Actions will comprise innovation, research and development; collaborative market and supply chain; collaborative landscape scale activity; farming in designated landscapes; Habitat Wales Scheme (Commons); and Integrated National Resources Scheme.

Grants/regulations/legislation/environment

1. The Department of Energy Security and Net Zero is to allow farmers to erect a wind turbine with a maximum height of 30 metres without having to submit complex planning proposals.
2. Proposals have been put forward by the UK governments which would restrict the shooting of wild bird species including woodcock, pintail, golden eye and pochard ducks, woodpigeon, common snipe, coot and golden plover.

3. The Public Accounts Committee has advised that farms and businesses are not being provided with enough guidance or support to comply with environmental regulations. With Defra planning changes which will add further complexity to the farming sector, the Committee has recommended that Defra should assess how farmers need to engage with regulators. It insisted that Defra report within 6 months how disruption would be minimised along with the progress made on understanding the implications of the new water regulator as well as showing how farmers would be allowed sufficient time to adapt to the transition.
4. The Greenhouse Gas protocol has released the Land Sector and Removals Standard. This provides standards and guidance for how carbon footprints should be constructed and calculated to ensure that results are comparable between businesses or projects. The standard outlines how emissions from agricultural holdings should be reported and provides a framework for reporting carbon removals.
5. Seven British businesses have each been awarded £80,000 in Space Commercialisation Credits that will provide business and technical support to develop space and AI technologies that will benefit farming. Support will be provided by the Satellite Applications Catapult. The award winners include:
 - xIONI which builds digital farm simulations to give farmers real-time data to manage soil health, cut input costs and keep environmental reporting on track.
 - Gentian which uses AI-powered satellite analysis to track wildlife habitats and biodiversity changes, making environmental risk assessments faster for developers and reducing reliance on expensive site visits.
6. A competition for a delivery partner for a new national forest in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor has opened.
7. The National Drought Group has reported that all areas are now out of drought with East Anglia moving out of recovery on 23 March.
8. The Farm Carbon Toolkit and HSBC competition is seeking to reward a pioneering farm business that is working to reduce emissions, use new technology or inspire others. The competition is open at farmcarbontoolkit.org.uk/carbon-farmer-of-the-year.
9. The 190 Coast to Coast Path, known as 'Wainwright way', has become England's latest Nature Trail. The Path starts at St Bees Head on the Irish Sea, traverses 3 National Parks, and ends at Robin Hood's Bay on the North Sea. Natural England and partners have invested £5.5 millions to upgrade the Path.
10. Nature Estate Cymru has been convened comprising major landowners in the country to collaborate on delivering environmental change at scale. The new group will initially focus on tree planting targets and protecting 30 per cent of Wales' land, fresh water and sea for nature by 2030. It will also tackle water quality, invasive species, wildfire risk and public access to nature.

11. Research by the University of Leeds has suggested that cattle grazing at a nature reserve in the Yorkshire Dales has increased plant diversity by 40 per cent and a fivefold increase in butterfly numbers.
12. The Seven Sisters has been designated as a new 1,500-hectare National Nature Reserve. The landscape, formed from the remains of sea creatures compacted over millennia, forms a huge chalk dome that contains one of Britain's largest aquifers.
13. The Welsh Government has launched the first section of a new 80km forest trail which stretches from Porthkerry Park in the Vale of Glamorgan to Pont Walby viaduct near Glynneath. It will link 12 National Forest sites and 24 woodlands.
14. Applications have opened for the Food and Drink Processing Scheme Scotland with £9 millions available. It offers match-funded capital grants backing projects to increase productivity, improve efficiency and invest in new equipment and technology.

Other matters of farm finance and tenure

1. Forecast figures of Farm Business Income for the year to February 2026 have been published:
 - FBI on cereal farms will be down 66 per cent to £17,000.
 - General cropping FBI will be down 50 per cent to £54,000.
 - Dairy FBI will be up 45 per cent to £224,000.
 - Lowland grazing livestock FBI will be up 9 per cent to £45,000.
 - Less Favoured Area grazing livestock FBI will be down 8 per cent to £37,000.
 - Specialised pigs FBI will be down 41 per cent to £75,000.
 - Mixed farms FBI will be down 32 per cent to £40,000.
2. IGD has warned of long-term workforce shortages and skills gaps across the food industry. It is relaunching its Feeding Britain's Future movement, with six targeted interventions designed to help the industry strengthen the quality of new employees. A new IGD report – 'Food and drink workforce – a quiet crisis building' – suggests there is a growing risk to national food security. It states that the 'quiet crisis' behind supermarket shelves risks becoming visible through reduced availability, declining service levels, rising costs and increased operational strain throughout the supply chain. The six interventions aim to:
 - Provide free, cross-industry early-career learning to build confidence and highlight long-term careers in food and drink.
 - Deliver a national schools programme to build skills, confidence and awareness of sector opportunities.
 - Increase visibility of food sector careers across widely used platforms and digital channels.
 - Establish strategic university partnerships to raise the profile of food and drink careers.

- Deliver scalable work experience opportunities to build confidence and practical skills for young people.
 - Bring the industry together to amplify a collective voice and champion food and drink careers including its youth-focused Mmmake Your Mark campaign.
- 3.** Data has been published on energy use in farms in 2023/24:
- Red diesel was the most commonly used fuel at 98 per cent.
 - Renewable energy was created in 32 per cent of farm businesses with solar power the most popular at 27 per cent.
 - Of those farms employing solar power, 84 per cent had panels on rooftops, while 10 per cent had field-based panels.
 - Financial incentives were the most popular reason for installing solar panels while 78 per cent were seeking to reduce the cost of energy bills.
 - Carbon audits had been carried out on 20 per cent of farms, with dairy at the top at 57 per cent.
- 4.** Data has been published on the balance sheets and farming performance in England in the year to February 2025.
- The average level of debt was 11 per cent, unchanged.
 - The average net worth was £2.5 millions while 24 per cent had a net worth of over £3 millions.
 - Net interest payments were 15 per cent of Farm Business Income, down 5 per cent on 2023/24.
 - The average return on capital employed was -0.1 per cent, up 0.7 per cent on 2023/24.
 - 51 per cent of all farms had a return of capital employed of less than 0 per cent, 27 per cent achieved a return of up to 2.5 per cent, 9 per cent up to 5 per cent, 7 per cent up to 10 per cent and 6 per cent over 10 per cent.
- 5.** During January, the Agricultural Price Index for outputs increased by 1.8 per cent, compared to a year earlier, and by 0.4 per cent compared to December. The index for inputs increased by 1.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively.
- 6.** Data has been published on estimated Scottish farming income in 2024/25:
- Average farm income was £58,800, up 30 per cent on the previous year.
 - The average farming profit was £500.
 - Cereal farm income fell to £28,600.
 - General cropping income fell by only 1 per cent to £165,300 due to high potato prices.
 - Dairy farm income increased by 85 per cent to £218,500.
 - Less Favoured Area cattle farms generated income of £40,800, up 88 per cent, while general livestock farms achieved £28,600.
 - The proportion of unprofitable general cropping farms more than doubled to 25 per cent.

- The proportion of farms profitable without support payments rose to 41 per cent but this fell to 7 per cent for Less Favoured Area sheep farms.
 - The average farm net worth increased to £2.03 millions.
7. A report by cross-party think tank Demos, supported by McCain Foods, entitled The Sustainable Farming Dividend, suggests that a transition to regenerative farming can strengthen the resilience of food production, stabilise prices and generate billions in economic benefits across the UK agri-food sector. It considers that nature restoration through sustainable practices could unlock £56.3 billions in natural capital by 2035 while adoption of sustainable methods could increase farm profits by £1.6 billions per year by 2035. Sustainable methods could reduce inputs by £905 millions annually and fertilizer imports by £449 millions. The report found that 61 per cent of the population back greater government investment in sustainable farming, 45 per cent believe it should be prioritised over other spending areas and 31 per cent would view the Government more favourably if it increased investment.
 8. The Welsh Government has launched the Sustainable Agriculture Loan Scheme which will offer loans at a fixed rate of 3 per cent, repayable over up to 15 years, to help small and medium-sized farms invest in energy efficiency, waste management and productivity improvements.
 9. The Farm Tenancy Forum has published a guidance note to support landlords and tenants considering long-term Farm Business Tenancies. It may be accessed at ala.org.uk.
 10. The Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill has been passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Product prices

A. Market background

1. Sterling gained a small amount against the Euro but weakened against the US Dollar this month; the Dollar exchange being far more volatile. Opening the month at 87.6p per Euro, Sterling peaked mid-month at 86.0p before falling back to a late March close of 86.8p per € (0.8p stronger). Against the US Dollar the picture was far less clear, with Sterling opening at 74.2p per \$ and performing several peaks and troughs throughout the month; the strongest being 74.1p; the weakest being 76.0p; closing at the weaker end - 75.7p per \$ (1.5p down).
2. The gold price, in the face of the general expectation at a time of global military action, fell back for most of March but then stabilised near the end of the month. Opening at £3,981 per troy ounce, the price dropped almost 23 per cent to a low of £3,080 before recovering in the final week to close at £3,451 (down £530).

3. Crude oil prices closed significantly up due to the unrest in Iran and particularly the restricted movement through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent Crude opened at \$72.87 per barrel and gained almost 54 per cent in the first three weeks, peaking at \$112.19 per barrel, before settling in the final week to a closing average of \$107.53 per barrel, up \$34.66 and the highest average since June 2022.

B. Crops

1. The cereals market has shown a degree of improvement, particularly looking further ahead at futures. The main driver is clearly the US / Iran tension, adding a 'risk premium' to most commodities, but with buyers mindful that global production could fall in the coming season as soaring fuel and fertilizer prices kick in, suppressing optimum yields. With northern hemisphere crops approaching the end of the 'winter kill' period, the global market focus is now falling on the effect of the dry conditions in the US grain belt. Despite this, milling wheat premiums remain below £10/tonne. Feed wheat futures closed significantly higher as a result of the global unrest; by late March, deliveries for November 2026, and 2027 were £185/tonne (+10) and £193/tonne (+11) respectively, with January 2028 deliveries sitting at £196/tonne. Oilseed rape prices closed marginally up, having been higher in the month; the rising crude oil price underpinning the market, whilst the weaker Pound (vs \$) suppressed it. The final US spring plantings (soya v maize) could have a marked effect in the coming month.

Average spot prices in late March (per tonne ex-farm): feed wheat £166 (+3); milling wheat £173 (+1); feed barley £153 (+1); oilseed rape £433 (+2); feed peas £205 (-1); feed beans £207 (+1).

C. Livestock

1. The average live-weight cattle prices for steers closed marginally higher, whilst the heifer average dropped back. The average steer price, opening at 367p/kg lw, held steady for the first half of the month, then edged up in the latter half to close the month at 369p/kg lw (up 2p to sit 15p/kg below the average a year earlier). The average finished heifer price fell early on followed by a partial recovery; opening at 386p/kg lw it dropped to 374p/kg then improved gradually to a closing average of 380p/kg (down 6p to sit 14p below the average a year earlier). The average dairy cow price demonstrated large swings this month but closed pretty much where it started. From an opening position of £2,082 it fell to £1,658, recovered to £1,958 and dropped again, this time to £1,691, before a further recovery to a closing average of £2,063 per head (down £19 overall to sit £8 below the prior year average).
2. The average finished lamb price (SQQ liveweight, old season) continued to climb 'with purpose', in contrast to the beef market, as a result of the combination of Easter lamb demand and cargo vessels hampered by Middle East military action at sea. From an opening average of 369p/kg, the average price relaxed to 362p/kg early on before climbing sharply to close the month at 417p/kg (up 48p, sitting 72p/kg above the average a year earlier).

3. The average UK standard pig price (SPP deadweight) continued its downward trend this month. From an opening position of 186.5p/kg dw, it fell to a closing position of 182.7p/kg (down 3.8p/kg overall, 21.7p/kg below the previous year).
4. The average UK all milk prices for December and January were revised down by DEFRA to 39.56ppl and 37.49ppl respectively. The February average, reported in March, fell a further 1.42ppl to 36.07ppl, sitting 10.02ppl below the average a year earlier and 4ppl below the rolling 5-year average.

Other crop news

1. Latest AHDB estimates show that 82 per cent of UK winter wheat crops are in good or excellent condition, up from 67 per cent a year ago. However, disease pressure from septoria and yellow rust is on the increase. 85 per cent of winter barley is good or excellent as is 88 per cent of winter oats and 84 per cent of oilseed rape.
2. A study conducted by James Peck, as part of a Nuffield Farming Scholarship, into how farmers are using regenerative principles in the cultivation of potatoes has suggested:
 - The most successful farms minimise soil disturbance; diversify through rotation; keep the soil surface covered; maintain living roots; and integrate livestock.
 - Growing a well-established cover crop and reducing cultivation leads to improved soil structure and reduces the cultivation needs of subsequent potato crops.
 - The introduction of livestock reduces the need for fertilizer and pesticides.
3. North-Western European Potato Growers has warned growers about the continued risks of over production following one of the worst seasons for surplus crop and low values in recent history. It has advised growers against entering into supply contracts without a clearly defined price. It has also reminded producers to consider the technical, health and environmental consequences of clearing unsold stocks onto fields and suggests that alternative outlets such as animal feed, anaerobic digestion or donations should be considered first.
4. The Agricultural Price Index for January shows increases of 21.7 per cent for forage plants, compared to a year earlier, and 3.1 per cent for fresh vegetables but there were falls of 11.7 per cent for wheat, 4.5 per cent for barley, 17.3 per cent for oats, 5 per cent for potatoes, 3.7 per cent for oilseed rape and 12.3 per cent for fresh fruit. Compared to December there were increases of 1.6 per cent for barley, 2.3 per cent for oats, 0.5 per cent for oilseed rape, 1.6 per cent for forage plants, 5.1 per cent for fresh vegetables and 2.8 per cent for fresh fruit but a fall of 1.5 per cent for wheat.

5. A study conducted by SRUC has considered the impact of the fungus Ergot on the cropping of barley using sustainable farming methods. Legal limits are 0.5g per kg and Ergot has been the leading cause of malting barley rejections in 3 of the last 5 years. Research in Scotland has found that oats grown in organic systems contain lower levels of mycotoxins than those grown in conventional systems. Greater diversity in organic farming systems could be helping crops become more resilient to fungal attack.
6. Defra's ADOPT fund is to support an initiative involving Fen Peas, the Processors and Growers Research Organisation and Dyson Farming Research to reassess optimum plant densities in vining peas for the frozen food industry.
7. The Government has temporarily restarted the Ensus bioethanol plant on Teeside so as to provide critical supplies of CO₂ which are vital for the sectors of packaged meats, fresh food and healthcare. The plant will initially operate for a period of 3 months.
8. A survey by British Apples & Pears has revealed that 97 per cent of growers and 67 per cent of grower/packers consider farm assurance, compliance and audit as one of the three most important business challenges. The cost of labour is cited by 95 per cent of growers and 89 per cent of grower/packers. However, 43 per cent of those surveyed were less confident about the future compared to 70 per cent of respondents a year ago. 14 per cent described their relationship with supermarkets as a 'true partnership' compared to 3 per cent last year.
9. A study published in the Journal of Agricultural Economics has suggested that flower strips in orchards can reduce crop damage by rose apple aphid.
10. Sustain Wiltshire is planning to grow fruit and vegetables on a landfill site at Royal Wootton Bassett. A 'low-carbon, affordable production hub' takes methane gas from the site and turns it into heat, power and purified carbon dioxide. Ultra-violet horticulture lighting operates within an inflatable growing dome which is expected to produce 10 tonnes of fruit and vegetables each year in 'perfect year-round growing conditions.' If successful, up to 100 domes could be erected on site.
11. Eternal.ag, a German agritech startup, has launched Harvester, a fully autonomous harvesting robot designed for tomato greenhouses to address widespread labour shortages.
12. A study conducted by Dole UK and AgriSound at Dole's Future of Food research site in Langley, Kent has revealed that yield increases of up to 28 per cent can be achieved in strawberries by using advanced growing materials. The programme compared lysris SecondShy thermal reduction polytunnel covers with standard industry plastic, using AgriSound's bioacoustics sensors to continuously monitor pollinator activity with the crop. Average bee activity was 4 per cent higher across the season, with uplifts of 10-13 per cent during peak flowering. Overall, yield increased by 3 per cent with berries showing higher average weight and increased Brix. Data collection costs fell by 87 per cent and carbon footprint was down 91 per cent.

13. Angus Soft Fruits' AVA Berries Breeding Programme is to launch AVA Dalicia in the UK market for the 2026/27 season. The variety has a high percentage of Class 1 fruit, has low waste, even ripening and a uniform conical shape. It is easy to pick and is tolerant to botrytis.
14. Following a donation of £5 millions from the Garfield Weston Foundation, the John Innes Centre and The Sainsbury Laboratory are to create Technology Platform 1, a next-generation glasshouse, insectary and horticultural research facility at the Norwich Research Park. The project will be part of the Healthy Plants, Healthy People, Healthy Planet campaign.
15. The Food Standards Agency has reported that 16.5 million bottles of wine were produced across the UK in 2025 with white wine production up 131 per cent. The number of vineyards grew by 4.3 per cent to 1,158 while about 10,000 people are employed in the sector.
16. Experts in horticulture, linguistics and artificial intelligence from the University of Nottingham have secured UKRI funding to delve into the archives of the Royal Horticultural Society to investigate whether historical texts can uncover lost horticultural methods and techniques to determine if they could provide new solutions for plants that are difficult to grow and multiply.
17. A UKRI-funded project between the University of Sheffield and Farm Urban is to build a vertical salad farm 1.1km underground at the Boulby Underground Laboratory in a working polyhalite and salt mine off the coast of Whitby, North Yorkshire. The project is designed to explore the potential for underground food production.
18. Fischer Farms, the firm behind one of the world's largest vertical farms, has formed a strategic partnership with Lancashire-based Dawndew Salad to grow a variety of cresses and microgreens

Other livestock news

1. Data has been published on livestock populations in England as at 1 December 2025:
 - The total number of cattle and calves was 4,827,080, down 1.7 per cent on June and 1.1 per cent on a year earlier.
 - The number of female cattle was 3,546,052, down 1.3 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively.
 - The number of cattle aged over 2 years was 1,902,106, down 2.2 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively.
 - The beef breeding herd was 545,444, down 4.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively.
 - The dairy breeding herd was 1,080,058, down 0.2 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively.
 - The total number of pigs was 3,638,183, down 0.4 per cent on June but up 0.8 per cent on a year ago.

- The number of breeding pigs was 322,527, up 3.1 per cent on June but down 3 per cent on a year ago.
 - The female breeding herd was 241,172, up 1.3 per cent on June but down 6.5 per cent on a year ago.
 - The number of fattening pigs was 3,315,656, down 0.8 per cent on June but up 1.1 per cent on a year ago.
 - The total number of sheep and lambs was 9,421,772, down 29 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively.
 - The female breeding herd was 5,697,757, down 11 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.
2. The Food Standards Agency has launched a consultation on proposals that would offer the smallest abattoirs a 90 per cent discount on regulatory charges on a sliding scale. About a third would receive a 90 per cent discount but larger abattoirs would not qualify.
 3. BCMS has published data on calf registrations in 2025:
 - 2.51 million calves were registered in 2025, 1 per cent down on 2024.
 - 2.04 million calves were registered for beef production, down 0.4 per cent.
 - Dairy bull calf registrations fell by 8 per cent while dairy heifer registrations fell by 3 per cent.
 4. Data has been published on livestock populations in the UK as at 1 December 2025:
 - The total of cattle and calves was 9,055,069, down 2.5 per cent on June and 1.1 per cent on a year ago.
 - The number of female cattle was 6,883,771, down 1.7 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively.
 - The number of cattle aged over 2 years was 3,620,724, down 2.3 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively.
 - The beef breeding herd was 1,237,583, down 4 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively.
 - The dairy breeding herd was 1,845,136, down 0.2 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively.
 - The total number of sheep and lambs was 20,445,440, down 33 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively.
 - The female sheep breeding herd was 13,013,487, down 12 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively.

Data on pig numbers at December is not available.
 5. Foot-and-mouth disease has been detected in Greece on the island of Lesbos, the first in the country since 2000. There have now been 40 outbreaks in Cyprus.
 6. Since January, 3 further outbreaks of Lumpy Skin Disease have occurred in Spain, but there have been no further reports from France.

7. During February, with comparisons to a year earlier:

- UK prime cattle slaughterings fell by 1.8 per cent to 162,000 head.
- Beef and veal production fell by 0.1 per cent to 73,000 tonnes.
- Sheep slaughterings rose by 8.2 per cent to 950,000 head.
- Mutton and lamb production rose by 9.8 per cent to 23,000 tonnes.
- Pig slaughterings rose by 2.3 per cent to 844,000 head.
- Pigmear production rose by 5.2 per cent to 82,000 tonnes.

8. Latest milk price announcements include:

- Sainsbury's has reduced the price of liquid milk contracts by 0.5ppl.
- Muller Direct and Payne's Dairies have implemented reductions of 1ppl; Crediton Dairies has reduced its price by 2ppl; and Pembrokeshire Creamery has reduced its price by 1.34ppl.
- As regards cheese contracts, Barbers, Saputo and Wensleydale Creamery are down 1.9ppl, 1.5ppl and 1.29ppl respectively, while Belton Cheese has dropped by 3ppl although Leprino has increased its price by 0.4ppl.
- For those with manufacturing contracts, the only change was Dale Farm GB which saw a reduction of 0.25ppl.

9. Scientists at Wageningen University and Research have conducted research into whether feeding less protein to dairy cows results in reduced nitrogen loss and also methane emissions. 64 cows were followed during two lactations of a minimum of 44 weeks each. The cows were fed rations with different protein levels, all of which were below the advisory level. Feed intake, milk production and methane emissions were measured. Manure and urine samples were collected in early and mid-lactation.

- Nitrogen use efficiency for milk production was highest in the low-protein group and lowest in the high-protein group. This was consistent across lactations.
- Nitrogen excretion via urine followed the above but excretion via manure did not differ between the groups.
- Total methane excretion was lowest in the low protein group but, when expressed per kilogram of milk produced or per kilogram of feed intake, the differences disappeared.

The conclusion of the report is that lowering the protein levels in rations can lead to a reduction in nitrogen excretion without affecting milk production provided the right balance is achieved.

10. During January, with comparisons to December:

- Milk available to processors fell by 2 per cent to 1,248 million litres
- Liquid milk production rose by 6.7 per cent to 531 million litres.
- Cheese production rose by 2.9 per cent to 43,000 tonnes.
- Butter production rose by 25 per cent to 17,200 tonnes.

- 11.** The results of the second year of the Milk Every Moment survey, developed by AHDB in association with British Universities and Colleges shows:
 - 95 per cent of students see milk as part of a healthy, balanced diet, up 5 per cent on last April.
 - 83 per cent are aware that milk provides a range of vitamins and minerals, up 17 per cent.
 - 76 per cent know milk can support training or sporting performance, up 4 per cent.
 - 71 per cent recognise milk as naturally rich in high-quality protein, up 14 per cent.
 - 67 per cent are aware that milk is a natural source of vitamin B12, up 15 per cent.
- 12.** The GB milking herd fell to 1.6 million head in January, 1.3 per cent down on the previous year and the lowest for a decade. The female herd fell by 1.6 per cent to 2.47 million head, with all age groups down except 4-6 year olds. The average age of a milker was 4.53 years, slightly up on 2025.
- 13.** A report published by PAN Livestock Service and National Milk Records shows that, in the year to August 2025, the median value for 305-day milk production was 9,136kg, while milk yield per cow per year was 8,962kg. Somatic cell count values show a median of 160,000 cells/ml, with the top 25 per cent of herds at or below 128,000 cells/ml. The median age for first calving was 26.5 months with the top 25 per cent achieving 25 months. The report covered a cross-section of 500NMR milk-recorded Holstein herds.
- 14.** An article published in Advances in Temperate Grassland science has suggested that including plantain in perennial ryegrass/white clover pasture appears to be a low-cost carbon option to reduce nitrogen leaching and nitrous oxide emissions without any negative effects on pasture production, animal production, milk quality and animal health
- 15.** Farmers First has mothballed its Wrexham abattoir.
- 16.** During February, average butterfat fell by 0.4 per cent, compared to January, but was 0.7 per cent higher than a year earlier at 4.43 per cent. Average protein fell by 1.2 per cent, compared to January, but was up 2.2 per cent on a year earlier at 3.49 per cent.
- 17.** The Agricultural Price Index for January shows increases of 14.7 per cent for cattle and calves, compared to a year earlier, and 1.6 per cent for poultry but there were falls of 6.5 per cent for pigs, 1.7 per cent for sheep and lambs, 12.3 per cent for milk and 0.9 per cent for eggs. Compared to December, there was an increase of 0.3 per cent for sheep and lambs but falls of 0.2 per cent for cattle and calves and 3.1 per cent for pigs.

18. The Government has committed another of its regular U-turns by agreeing to allow overseas sheep shearers to enter the UK this summer without visas but has warned the facility will not be available in 2027. It has previously said that the industry should be training British shearers. Perhaps some of the Defra personnel who are to be seconded to farms to understand farming would like to try their hand!
19. The High Court has ruled that Dartmoor Commoners Council have failed to make a meaningful assessment of stocking levels so as to manage livestock husbandry and maintain the commons.
20. The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Act 2025 has come into force.
21. The Welsh Government has confirmed £3 millions of funding to continue the Welsh Sheep Genetics Programme, led by Hybu Cig Cymru.
22. Since the beginning of January, African swine fever has continued to spread across Europe with a total of 1,871 cases in wild boar and 64 cases in domestic pigs. Most cases have been in the east of the region, but cases have been spreading westwards in Germany.
23. During March, cases of BTV-3 bluetongue disease have been reported in Hampshire, Cumbria, Staffordshire, Kent, Cornwall, Devon, Cheshire, Oxfordshire, East Sussex and Lancashire.
24. A vaccine trial for highly pathogenic avian influenza has commenced, initially focused on turkeys as they are highly susceptible to the disease.
25. Germany has reported 2 outbreaks of Newcastle Disease in poultry, the first since 2008. Since January, Poland has recorded 17 further outbreaks.
26. RamCompare, the UK's national progeny test, is seeking commercial farm partners holding Suffolk, Hampshire Down and Charolais breeds to collect performance data on their lamb crop from birth through to slaughter.
27. During February, with comparisons to a year earlier:
 - UK commercial layer chick placings rose by 3.3 per cent to 3 million chicks.
 - Broiler chick placings rose by 2.9 per cent to 91.2 million chicks.
 - Turkey poult placings rose by 34 per cent to 600,000 chicks.
 - Turkey slaughterings rose by 18 per cent to 500,000 birds.
 - Broiler slaughterings rose by 0.3 per cent to 88 million birds.
 - Total poultry meat production fell by 4.5 per cent to 151,200 tonnes.
28. During March, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 has been confirmed in commercial poultry in Pickering, Yorkshire.

VIII Inputs/Supply businesses

1. As at 20 March, prices of UK-produced ammonium nitrate are up 25 per cent on those for February, imported ammonium nitrate is up 29 per cent, granular urea is up 36 per cent and liquid urea ammonium nitrate is up 13 per cent.

2. The Agricultural Price Index for inputs shows falls of 1.4 per cent for seeds, compared to a year earlier, and 3.1 per cent for animal feedingstuffs, but increases of 1 per cent for energy and lubricants, 11.3 per cent for fertilizer, 1.9 per cent for chemicals, 0.7 per cent for veterinary services, 4.9 per cent for equipment maintenance and 2 per cent for buildings maintenance. Compared to December, there were falls of 0.4 per cent for seeds, 1 per cent for energy and lubricants and 0.1 per cent for veterinary services but increases of 4.1 per cent for fertilizer, 0.2 per cent for animal feedingstuffs and 0.5 per cent for equipment maintenance.
3. The 4 home governments have issued a consultation document with a proposal to repeal existing legislation and replace it with the UK Fertilising Product Regulations (UK FPR) for placing products on the market in the UK. Views are sought on:
 - basing UK FPR on conformity assessment.
 - technical requirements for fertilising products marketed under UK FPR.
 - proposals to establish the detailed parameters which would apply to products and the more technical aspects of UK FPR.
 - proposals for enforcement.
 - Transitional arrangements.

The consultation closes on 13 May.

4. A project delivered through the Innovative UK ADOPT programme, involving Dyson Farming Research, Brixworth Farming Company and the GWCT Allerton Project, will test a range of next-generation low-emission fertilizer approaches in wheat and potatoes, comparing them with standard nutrition programmes on contrasting soil types.
5. Data from 2025, published by Richard Austin Agriculture, has demonstrated that using biostimulants can reduce the impact of late potato blight and increase yield.
6. The 2026 edition of the AHDB Nutrient Management Guide has been published and a PDF copy can be obtained from info@ahdb.org.uk.
7. A paper from Andrew McGuire of Washington State University, concerning soil inoculants, has been reported by the Society of Agriculture. The report reveals:
 - Less than 3 per cent of soil microbes can be cultivated in a laboratory and therefore the benefits cannot be assessed. Commercially available inoculants comprise a small proportion of the 3 per cent.
 - Each microbe – habitat supports its own microbial community. Introduced microbes are unlikely to be beneficial.
 - Native microbes are likely to resist the introduction of introduced strains making those introductions ineffective.
 - Most inoculant suppliers market a single product for all soils, yet one microbe does not fit all.

The report suggests that farmers should value the inoculants which suit their soil and create the optimum conditions for them to thrive.

8. New Biobest research has confirmed the effective predation of raspberry aphid with the use of the predator *Micromus angulatus* at temperatures as low as 12°C.
9. Syngenta is to open a biotech and research centre at a cost of £100 millions at its site in Bracknell. The Biological Sciences Technology and Research Centre will deliver the latest advances in biological sciences, molecular and analytical research and digital innovation towards crop protection.

Marketing

1. The NFU, WWF and RSPCA have collectively called upon the Government to honour its manifesto commitment and introduce core animal welfare and environmental standards for agri-food imports. The Labour Party promised to 'promote the highest standards when it comes to food production' while in its Trade Strategy, it recognised concerns about the unfair competitive advantages provided by different methods of production in global supply chains.
2. The Department of Health has opened a public consultation on applying the new nutrient profiling model to advertising and promotions restrictions. Food and drinks identified as less healthy would be restricted from being placed in certain locations in stores and from volume price offers that encourage over-purchasing. They would also be subject to advertising restrictions on television before 9pm and online at any time.
3. Aldi is to increase the number of long-term agreements it has with British produce and horticulture suppliers with a view to securing a minimum of 50 per cent of its domestic produce supply from such agreements with UK growers by the end of 2027. The agreements cover periods of two years or more. About 75 per cent of Aldi's sales are sourced from UK-based suppliers.
4. According to the Soil Association's latest Organic Market Report, sales of organic produce increased by 4.2 per cent with multiples increasing sales by 7 per cent, four times the rate of growth for non-organic produce. However, UK organic production has not grown at all with the increase in sales being satisfied by imports.
5. AHDB has produced data on dairy trade in the last 3 months of 2025:
 - Exports grew by 28 per cent to 367,000 tonnes with value up 13 per cent to £551 millions.
 - Milk and cream exports increased by 56,800 tonnes, powders by 14,000 tonnes, cheese by 7,900 tonnes and butter by 3,200 tonnes. Exports of yoghurt fell by 5.6 per cent and whey and whey products by 5.9 per cent.
 - Exports to Ireland were up 26 per cent, Netherlands 31 per cent, France 20 per cent, Belgium 41 per cent, Spain 121 per cent and Denmark 65 per cent.
 - Imports fell by 1.5 per cent to 301,700 tonnes.

- Milk and cream imports fell by 15.8 per cent, butter 17.8 per cent, yoghurt 1 per cent and whey and whey products 3.2 per cent. However, cheese and curd recorded an increase of 7.2 per cent and powders 5.8 per cent.
6. In the 4 weeks to 25 January, grocery sales increased by 3.6 per cent, compared to a year ago. Ocado increased sales by 14.1 per cent, Lidl by 10.1 per cent, Waitrose by 5.5 per cent, Sainsbury's by 5.3 per cent and Tesco by 4.4 per cent. However, Asda sales fell by 3.7 per cent and Co-op by 1.6 per cent.
 7. Data from Worldpanel by Numerator UK on red meat retail in the 12 weeks to 22 February shows:
 - Volume sales by beef fell by 6.9 per cent but spend increased by 8.1 per cent.
 - Primary beef volumes fell by 8.5 per cent with mince down 9.4 per cent.
 - Processed beef volumes fell by 7.4 per cent with burgers and grills down 7.7 per cent.
 - Added-value volumes increased by 1 per cent, marinades were up 5.4 per cent and sous vide up 0.6 per cent.
 - Lamb volumes rose by 1.5 per cent with spend up 6.2 per cent.
 - Pigmeat production rose by 5.2 per cent to 82,000 tonnes.
 - Primary lamb cuts increased by 3.6 per cent with roasting up 6.8 per cent including a 13.4 per cent increase for leg roasting.
 - Volumes of processed lamb fell by 2.9 per cent.
 - Added-value volumes fell by 2.9 per cent with marinades down 9.5 per cent.
 - Volumes of pig meat fell by 1.6 per cent but spend was up 0.7 per cent.
 - Primary pig meat volumes increased by 1 per cent with roasting up 0.8 per cent. Volumes of mince rose by 45.4 per cent.
 - Processed pig meat volumes fell by 3.5 per cent although gammon increased by 2.9 per cent.
 - Added-value volumes increased by 17.9 per cent with sous vide up 24.8 per cent.
 - Ready-to-cook volumes increased by 26.7 per cent.
 8. Lidl has set a new target to cut food waste by 70 per cent. A scheme, Surplus Saviours, run in partnership with the charity Neighbourly, allows volunteers and shoppers to collect and redistribute surplus food. The trial will begin in the Midlands and is expected to redistribute more than 5,000 tonnes of food through extended collection times and access to fresh and chilled items approaching their use-by date later in the evening.
 9. Data from Worldpanel by Numerator has revealed that, in the 4 weeks to 22 February, internal grocery sales grew by 9.7 per cent year on year taking the buying medium's share to 13 per cent, the highest level since July 2021. Ocado was the fastest-growing grocer with sales up 15.1 per cent and market share up to 2.1 per cent. Lidl sales increased by 10 per cent with market share up 0.5 per cent to 7.8 per cent. Sainsbury's saw growth of 5.2 per cent taking its market share up to 16.1 per cent while Tesco saw a market share increase of 0.2 per cent taking it to 28.5 per cent.

- 10.** A survey of 1,000 parents of children aged 4-12 conducted by Aldi has revealed that, during colder months, a third of children spend 20 minutes or less outdoors and are less inclined to eat fruit and vegetables. Half of parents find it easier to encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables after outdoor activity. Also, a third of parents found fruit and vegetable consumption fell when items were out of season.
- 11.** Data from NIQ Homespan POD on dairy retail in the 12 weeks to 21 February, with comparisons to a year earlier, shows:

 - Volumes of cows' milk fell 0.7 per cent but spend increased by 7.2 per cent. Whole milk volumes grew by 3 per cent but all other types recorded falls.
 - Cows' cheese volumes increased by 1.8 per cent with spend up 3.6 per cent.
 - Volumes of cows' butter fell by 0.8 per cent but spend increased by 1.8 per cent. Block butter volumes increased by 5.1 per cent but spreads fell 3.7 per cent.
 - Volumes of cows' yoghurt, yoghurt drinks and fromage frais grew by 6.6 per cent with spend up 9.2 per cent. Plain yoghurt volumes grew by 20.8 per cent while fat-free yoghurt grew by 1.34 per cent.
 - Cream volumes increased by 0.6 per cent with an 8.8 per cent increase in spend. Aerosol grew by 5.6 per cent, clotted by 1.2 per cent and crème fraiche by 0.7 per cent but all other types recorded falls.
- 12.** According to the latest tracking survey from the British Egg Industry Council involving 2,000 customers, the British Lion mark has returned to top place as the UK's most recognised food assurance label. 47 per cent of shoppers looked for the British Lion mark when buying eggs while the figure for 25-34 year-olds was 56 per cent. Red Tractor slipped 5 per cent to 65 per cent while RSPCA Assured fell by 25 per cent, its lowest level since rebranding from Freedom Food.
- 13.** The latest Bridging the Gap report from Sustain has suggested that integrating more organic fruit and veg into school meals could drive a substantial market for UK growers. School pilots in England, Scotland and Wales showed that increased public investment supported local farmers and led to 75,000 children eating organic fruit and veg.
- 14.** Worldwide Fruit has launched Resilience Hub, a digital platform developed with Blue North Sustainability, to support shared sustainability progress across its global supply base. The Hub has two core components, The WFL Supplier Scorecard and The Knowledge Hub. The platform allows suppliers and retail partners to track sustainability progress, compare performance, access practical guidance and engage with resources that support long-term resilience across the supply chain.
- 15.** Whole Foods Market is to open 6 new stores in London this year.
- 16.** Nationwide Produce, supplier to the wholesale and catering sectors with fruit and vegetables, has acquired Vale of Evesham – based Eurofresh Evesham.

Miscellaneous

1. The Local Government Association has asked the Government and the Sentencing Council to urgently review sentencing guidelines for fly-tipping. The average court fine is £539, £87 lower than the average £626 fixed penalty notice councils can issue for the same offence.
2. Vitagri has published a white paper which synthesises a PRISMA – informed review of over 3,000 peer-reviewed papers of the most rigorous review of farming and human nutrition ever produced in the UK. The headline findings are:
 - Pasture-fed cows fed on herb-rich grassland produce milk with 56 per cent more omega-3.
 - Organically grown crops show 18-69 per cent higher concentrations of protective polyphenols and antioxidants with vitamin C levels elevated by 5-25 per cent.
 - Grass-fed and pasture-raised beef delivers 23 per cent less fatty acid profiles and 47 per cent more omega-3.
 - Pasture raised hens produce 2-3 times more omega-3 and 2 times more vitamin E.
 - The UK's Food Information Regulations 2014 require 7 macronutrients to be published, all of which are least affected by soil health and farming practices. They exclude phytonutrients, minerals, trace elements and bioactive compounds.
3. A public consultation has been opened following the Government's decision to ban trail hunting. The British Hound Sports Federation has warned that the lives of 12,000 hounds are at risk. Views are sought on:
 - how trail hunting should be defined for the purpose of a ban.
 - whether any other legislative changes are needed to ensure that a ban is effective.
 - the use of animal-based scents in training dogs.
 - whether any other equestrian activities are at risk from being affected by the proposed ban.
 - how the introduction of a ban might affect dogs used for trail hunting.
 - the impacts on community, social, business, economics and the environment.
4. The Health and Safety Executive has announced another farm fatality taking the total to 30 since last April.
5. NFU Education participated in British Science Week by taking food and farming into 3,829 classrooms for 255,000 pupils with Science Farm Live lessons. Children in Key Stage 1 explored four farming-themed lessons, learning how cows and cow dung support the landscape, how farmers monitor and support biodiversity, the many jobs a tractor does and how sheepdogs are trained. Key Stage 2 children explored 'How science turns fields into feasts', learning about sugar production, robotic dairy farming, the value of city farms and beekeeping.

6. The Waste Equation Report, produced by consultancy firm Newton in partnership with The Felix Project and FareShare, has suggested that the UK food and drink manufacturing sector could help provide over one billion meals each year to people facing food insecurity. In the course of producing 18.5 million tonnes of food and drink, 550,000 tonnes is wasted. The report suggests that 23 per cent of the waste could be prevented while 16 per cent could be recovered for redistribution by charities, the equivalent of 212 million meals.
7. A report from the Business and Human Rights Centre has revealed there were 21 cases of alleged abuse affecting migrant workers in agri-food supply chains in the UK in 2025.
8. Data has been published on fuel poverty in England in 2024:
 - 11.4 per cent of households in rural areas were fuel poor compared to 11 per cent in urban areas. In the 5 years to 2024, the percentage for rural areas was unchanged but fell by 3 per cent in urban areas.
 - Households in rural areas had a fuel poverty gap of £668 compared to £346 in urban areas. This was an increase of £255, since 2019, for rural areas but only £166 in urban areas.
 - 17 per cent of rural properties off the gas grid were fuel poor compared to 10 per cent on the grid.
9. Figures from Wrap's latest report on food redistribution show that, between 2023 and 2024, redistributed food rose by 10 per cent to 210,000 tonnes. 46 per cent of surplus food was collected from retail, 28 per cent from manufacturing, 11 per cent from hospitality and food service and 3 per cent from farms.

Postscripts

1. Fred had been suffering from terrible headaches for over twenty years.

Finally, he went to see a specialist. After a long examination, the doctor said:

“Fred, the good news is I can cure your headaches. The bad news is ... it will require castration.

“You have a rare condition where your testicles press against your spine, causing severe headaches. Removing them is the only way to relieve the pressure.”

Fred was stunned and devastated, but after years of pain, he agreed to the surgery.

When he left the hospital, he felt strange and incomplete – but for the first time in decades, he had no headache.

As he walked down the street, he decided he needed a fresh start. A new life. Maybe even a new wardrobe.

He passed a men’s clothing store and thought, Why not?

He walked in and told the salesman, “I’d like a new suit.”

The elderly tailor looked him over and said, “You’re a size 44 long.”

Fred laughed. “That’s right. How did you know?”

“Been in the business sixty years,” the tailor said.

Fred tried on the suit – it fitted perfectly.

“How about a shirt?” the tailor asked.

Fred nodded, and the tailor studied him again. “34 sleeve, 16½ neck.”

“Amazing,” Fred said. “Exactly right.”

“Been in the business sixty years,” the tailor replied.

After trying on the perfect shirt, Fred walked around the store feeling better already.

Then the tailor asked, “How about some new underwear?”

“Sure,” Fred said.

The tailor looked him over and said, “Size 36”.

Fred laughed loudly. “Got you there! I’ve worn size 34 since I was eighteen.”

The tailor shook his head and said:

“You can’t wear size 34.

Size 34 would press your testicles right up against the base of your spine ... and give you a terrible headache.”

2. Three co-workers are having drinks at a bar. After a few too many, their tongues get a little loose.

The 1st one says: “I’m having an affair with our boss’s wife. But that obviously stays between us.”

The 2nd one says: “I’m gay. But I don’t think my family will approve so make sure it doesn’t leave this table.”

The 3rd one doesn’t speak up so the other two encourage him by saying that anything he says will be in strict confidence. Finally, he goes: “Well, my problem is that I can’t keep a secret.”

3. A young family moved into a house next to a vacant plot.

One day, a construction crew turned up to start building a house on the empty plot. Naturally, all this action piqued the curiosity of the young family’s 4-year old daughter, who took an interest in all the activity going on next door and spent much of each day watching the workers.

Eventually, the construction crew, a good-hearted bunch, took a liking to the little girl and adopted her as a sort of project mascot. They would chat with her and let her sit with them while they took coffee and lunch breaks. They would give her little jobs to do here and there to make her feel important, and at the end of the first week, they presented her with a “pay envelope” containing £10.

The little girl took this money home to her mother who suggested that she take her £10 “pay” to the bank and start a savings account. The teller at the bank was duly impressed and asked the little girl how she managed to earn her very own paycheck at such an early age.

The little girl proudly replied, “I worked last week with a real construction crew building the new house next door to us”.

“My heavens, young lady,” said the teller, “and you will be working on the same house again this week, too?”

The little girl replied, “I will, if those a***holes at Wickes ever deliver the f***ing plasterboard!”

Big brother will be watching your every move!

Another new set of regulations which will impact on farmers and landowners becomes law this year and comes into force on 6 April 2027 is the introduction of a public register of qualifying land control agreements.

Agreements which will be covered include options, pre-emptions, conditional contracts and any promotion agreement which confers a right to acquire land or take a lease of 15 years or more. The agreements must:

- Be in writing.
- Relate to registered land.
- Involve a right to acquire the freehold or a lease of 15 years or more.
- Last for a period of 18 months or more.
- Relate to land that includes surface or subterranean rights.

Exempt agreements will include:

- Contracts made for national security or defence purposes.
- Agreements in S.106 planning obligations that relate exclusively to infrastructure, amenities or services.
- Security arrangements for loan finance or overage payments.

Restrictive covenants and overage agreements will be outside the scope of the regulations.

Agreements entered into between the date of the regulations and 6 April 2027 must be registered by 6 October 2027.

Registration will also be required for any pre-existing rights that are assigned or varied after 6 April 2027.

The register will publish information in respect of each agreement to identify the type of right granted, to whom it has been granted, the affected land, and how long the agreement may last.

Clearly the published information may well be commercially sensitive.

It is also likely to increase pressure on the planning system as it will potentially give advance notice to objectors of proposed developments.

Another hurdle to overcome in seeking planning for development in an already complex environment.

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:

Karen Blackiston, Nick Holmes, Iain Morris, Ben Wilkinson

Chavereys Limited
The Goods Shed Jubilee Way Faversham Kent ME13 8GD

Tel: 01795 594495

Fax: 01795 594499

E-mail: mfu@chavereys.co.uk

www.chavereys.co.uk

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