



CHAVEREYS

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS & FINANCIAL ALCHEMISTS



Monthly Farming Update

May 2026

Policy issues

1. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee has expressed concerns at reports that the Government is to realign with EU policy on food in one move, without a transition period. If correct, farmers could be faced with being unable to use certain pesticides, herbicides and fungicides ‘overnight’. The Government has rejected its concerns.
2. The Food and Drink Federation has warned that the proposed phytosanitary agreement with the EU risks British produced food being ‘dumped’. If a potato has been produced using an EU banned pesticide, it will not be allowed to be sold in a UK supermarket. UK bakers will need to ensure that the flour used from wheat is produced in accordance with EU rules.
3. The Scottish National Party is proposing to create ‘statutory price ceilings’ for food staples to help families with the cost of living. The cap would apply to a ‘basket’ of 20 to 50 ‘essential’ items at supermarkets such as bread, milk and eggs. Supermarkets would be legally required to provide ‘one example line’ for each type of product at the capped price.

Reform

1. A coalition of Foundation for Common Land, the NFU, the National Sheep Association and the National Trust has demanded that Defra include common land in the Sustainable Farming Initiative and the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier schemes. The group has stated that ‘it is inequitable the marginal farm businesses that manage this iconic land, that comprises 21 per cent of England’s Sites of Special Scientific Interest, are being excluded from new schemes.

Grants/regulations/legislation/environment

1. A study by Rothamsted Research of intensive farming systems covering 72,000 km² of farmland during the period 2010 to 2021 has found:
 - Reductions of 18 per cent in both short-and long-term global warming potential.
 - A 21 per cent fall in acidification potential.
 - A 13 per cent fall in eutrophication potential, the nutrient run-off that can pollute watercourses.
 - Some water management catchments recorded pollution reductions of up to 76 per cent, some had improvements of less than 5 per cent.

2. A study led by the University of Leeds, including research members from Israel, China, the US and Canada, and published in Phys Org, has investigated the health risks posed by crops' absorption of 'contaminants of emerging concern' (CECs). CECs include pharmaceuticals, microplastics, engineered nanomaterials and PFAS ('forever chemicals'). The study has shown that CECs enter soils and crops through pathways including wastewater irrigation, biosolids, manure and agropastics. CECs can move through plant vascular systems and reach leaves, fruits and roots. They can drive antimicrobial resistance, interfere with plant biochemical processes and affect soil structure. PFAS are especially prone to bioaccumulating in leaf tissues.
3. A Defra sponsored report by Dr Hilary Cottam, 'Towards a flourishing uplands' has been published. Extracts include:
 - Visits included Dartmoor; Exmoor; Pennines; Lake District; Yorkshire Dales; and North York Moors. The report reveals 19 insights which identify opportunities for action.
 - Challenges for the next generation.
 - Farmers innovate and learn within trusted peer networks.
 - Successful and innovative farmers have diverse relationships.
 - Farmers are locked in expensive vertical relationships of power.
 - Nature and farming are oppositional forces with existing systems.
 - Local food systems are at the heart of thriving local economies, but the required infrastructure is absent.
 - Reimagining the Commons.
 - Rural communities are struggling with inadequate access to all services.
 - Rural poverty.
 - Housing.
 - Re-use, re-make, share.
 - The science guiding decision making (at Defra) is contested and data rarely takes whole system factors into account.
 - Defra is structured to support large scale (wealthy) farmers in mass ways.
 - (Over) Tourism.
 - Arbitrary boundaries and the potential of mosaics.
 - Industrialised environmentalism is taking a human toll.
 - Agricultural colleges – distant in space and time.
 - Existing structures of control lead to dependent infantilised cultures.
4. Defra has announced £8 millions of funding coupled with £42 millions of private investment to deliver up to 12 innovative tools to farmers to help reduce labour, energy and fertilizer use.

5. Scientists at Oxford University have developed a ‘superfood’ for honeybees by engineering yeast to produce the essential nutrients found in pollen. Colonies fed this designed diet produced 15 times more young. Working with the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, the University of Greenwich and the Technical University of Denmark, the scientists engineered *Yarrowia lipolytica* to produce a precise mix of six essential sterols. Over a study period the bees continued raising brood whereas those without sterols stopped producing brood after 90 days.
6. Defra is to invest £60 millions over the next 3 years into the Species Recovery Fund, administered by Natural England. A further £30 millions will be dedicated to fund species recovery on the national forest estate. Species to be supported include:
 - Turtle Dove – a project will be led by the RSPB and Kent Wildlife Trust in the Southeast of England, the only remaining stronghold.
 - Diamond-backed spider – only found in Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire.
 - Red-billed chough – funding for ongoing work in Kent where the first wild chough chick to be born in Kent for generations was found at Dover Castle.
 - Eurasian oystercatcher – capable of living for almost 50 years, 45 per cent of Europe’s population winters in England.
 - Glutinous snail – extinct in England and only found in Llyn Tegid in North Wales.
7. A detailed study into how burning and cutting heather affects vegetation on grouse moors has been published by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Pertinent extracts are:
 - Management strongly reduces heather dominance, opening up the plant community.
 - Cutting generally causes less damage to mosses than burning and leaving brash slows the creation of bare ground.
 - Burning creates the fastest early boost in cotton-grass flowering, a valuable food for grouse.
 - Sphagnum can recover well but its short-term response depends on treatment and local wetness.
 - Vegetation recovery varies hugely between sites, especially with altitude and water-table differences.
 - The GWCT commenced its research in 2019 on sites in Coverdale and Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Teesdale, Tynedale and Weardale in the North Pennines National Landscape. At each site, four areas of mature heather and similar topography were identified as experimental blocks, and in each block four 400m² plots were created, one for burning, one for cutting with brash removed, one for cutting with brash left and one for no management. Peat depth, plant cover, moss depth and vegetation were all measured while tubes were installed to measure the depth of the water table in peat in soil.

- Cotton-grass responded positively to all management types with cover tripling by year three. While there was an initial fall, its spring flowers increased dramatically in the ensuing four years.
 - Cushion-forming mosses in managed plots increased their cover by 250 per cent by year five yet declined materially on unmanaged plots.
 - The conclusion reached was that removing dominant, over-mature heather opens up the ground and allows a wider range of bog plants to thrive, important for creating active blanket bog and storing carbon.
8. Data to 2024 has been published on indicators of species abundance in England:
- All species, including priority species, have deteriorated over the short, medium and long terms.
 - Over the long-term, since 1970, the decline has been 40 per cent with 41 per cent of species declining while 30 per cent increased.
 - Over the short-term, since 2019, the decline has been 7 per cent with 47 per cent of species declining while 38 per cent increased.
 - Over the long-term, there were strong decreases in bumblebees, fish, moths and freshwater invertebrates with weak decreases in mammals and vascular plants. These decreases were mirrored over the short-term, but the strong decreases were greater.
 - Over the long-term, there were strong/weak decreases of 81 per cent of priority moths, 50 per cent of priority fish, 68 per cent of priority birds, 71 per cent of priority butterflies and 25 per cent of priority mammals.
 - Over the short-term, there were strong/weak decreases of 48 per cent of priority moths, 75 per cent of priority fish, 59 per cent of priority birds, 67 per cent of priority butterflies and 24 per cent of priority mammals.
9. Over 4,500 residents local to the rivers Wye, Lugg and Usk, have brought a mass pollution claim against chicken producer Avara Foods and Welsh Water in respect of environmental pollution of the rivers.

Other matters of farm finance and tenure

1. A survey conducted by the Society of Agriculture into the role of farm management has revealed that:
- 44 per cent of farm managers are under the age of 40.
 - 20% of farm managers earn a package valued in excess of £100,000 per year.
 - Recruitment negotiations increasingly focus on housing, vehicles and lifestyle benefits.
 - There is increased demand for individuals with business and financial acumen, formal agricultural education and experience across multiple farming systems.
 - High-potential candidates are more willing to move roles.
 - Employers are facing increased turnover at mid-management level.
 - Counteroffers are increasingly common.
 - Only 5 per cent of farm managers are women.

2. The British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme, which will cut electricity costs by up to 25 per cent for 10,000 manufacturers, has specifically excluded the horticulture sector, much to the annoyance of growers of crops in heated glasshouses.
3. The Institute of Economic Affairs has published a policy paper, 'A Taxing Inheritance', suggesting that the UK has the 5th highest tax on inheritance of the 38 countries which constitute the OECD. 18 out of the 38 levy no tax on transfers from parents to children while a further 10 charge preferential rates.
4. According to the latest Knight Frank Farmland Index, by the end of March, the acreage of publicly marketed farmland was down 54 per cent on a year earlier with only 5,600 acres advertised across England and Wales. In the 3 months to March, average prices of bare land fell by 0.9 per cent to £8,622/acre while the 12-month average was down by 5 per cent.
5. The Agricultural Price Index for outputs fell by 6.1 per cent in February, compared to a year ago, and by 3.2 per cent compared to January. The index for inputs increased by 1.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively.
6. Data has been published on farm business management practices in England in 2024/25. It shows:
 - 84 per cent of farms undertook at least one business management practice, the most common, at 57 per cent, being an informal business management plan.
 - 20 per cent of farms had no risk management strategy. The most common risk management practice was taking up Sustainable Farming Incentive agreements, done by 40 per cent.
 - 36 per cent considered there was no need for further management practices while 42 per cent felt they were doing all that was needed.
 - 92 per cent accessed business management advice and 85 per cent technical advice. Free advice was used by 56 per cent while the most common source of technical advice, at 54 per cent, was talking to other farmers.
 - At 37 per cent, the most common succession planning activity was reviewing the current succession plan. 22 per cent had a new succession plan in place while 10 per cent were creating a new succession plan.
7. Forest Market Review, published by John Clegg and Co, has reported over £250 millions of woodland plantation sales in 2025, comprising 11,300 hectares of stocked or plantable land, double the area sold in 2024. However, 3 larger sales mask the true position which suggests the market, as a whole, has slowed, and that average plantation values have fallen.
8. The Duchy of Cornwall has informed tenants on the Bradninch Estate in Devon that it intends to sell part of its portfolio. It is estimated up to 10 tenants could be affected.
9. The Valuation Office Agency has been absorbed into HM Revenue & Customs.

10. The British Tomato Growers' Association and the Cucumber & Pepper Growers' Association have warned the Government that the combination of increased electricity standing charges and imported gas prices will result in growers scaling back or halting production entirely unless glasshouses are included in relevant exemption schemes.
11. The Law Commission has published a scoping report on agricultural law in Wales as agricultural law in Wales is considered voluminous, complex and often difficult to understand. The report identifies 14 Acts of the UK Parliament, 1 Act of the Senedd and over 70 pieces of secondary legislation and assimilates law for inclusion in a new code of law.

Product prices

A. Market background

1. Sterling strengthened against both the Euro (marginally) and the US Dollar this month; the Euro movements were gradual, whilst the Dollar movements were more stepped. Opening the month at 86.8p per Euro, Sterling made a series of small gains over the course of the month to close at the month's peak of 86.2p per € (0.6p stronger). Against the US Dollar, Sterling opened at 75.7p per \$ and, in the opening 2 days, rose to 75.0p and fell back to 75.8p before stepped gains at the ends of weeks one and two followed by minor fluctuations led to a closing rate of 73.5p per \$ (up 2.2p).
2. The gold price continued its disassociation from the expected strength often seen with global military action. The average price rose in the early days and fell back at the end of April, with some minor volatility in the mix. Opening at £3,451 per troy ounce, the price peaked at £3,625 before dropping back to close at £3,403 (down £48).
3. Crude oil prices, on the other hand, have reacted in line with general expectation, particularly with the additional restriction of movement through the Strait of Hormuz, by being both volatile and strong, holding well above the rolling five-year average. Brent Crude opened at \$107.53 per barrel, falling to \$99.28 and climbing to \$111.64 in the first week. Over the remainder of the month, it hit a low of \$87.15 and a peak of \$120.59 per barrel, the highest since June 2022, before closing the month at \$111.41 per barrel, up \$3.88.

B. Crops

1. The cereals market has shown a much-needed increase, both in terms of spot price and futures. With the tension surrounding Iran baked into the market, this month's drivers have been mostly weather-based concerns: ongoing dry weather in the central USA grain belt is increasing the chances of irreversible yield erosion and the El Nino effect is predicted to result in exceptionally dry weather for Australia this season, both of which support a stronger market. In addition, the milling wheat premium has improved marginally. Feed wheat futures closed up again as a result of the ongoing on/off/on global unrest; by late April, deliveries for November 2026, and 2027 were £191/tonne (+6) and

£198/tonne (+5) respectively, with March 2028 deliveries sitting at £204/tonne. Oilseed rape prices closed up as a result of the strong support from continued high crude oil prices.

Average spot prices in late April (per tonne ex-farm): feed wheat £178 (+12); milling wheat £190 (+17); feed barley £156 (+3); oilseed rape £464 (+31); feed peas £202 (-3); feed beans £213 (+6).

C. Livestock

1. The average live-weight cattle prices for steers and heifers closed down, having started the month positively. The average steer price, opening at 369p/kg lw, climbed early on to peak at 374p/kg before falling back for the remainder of the month and closing at 344p/kg lw (down 25p to sit 39p/kg below the average a year earlier). The average finished heifer price moved similarly, opening at 380p/kg lw it rose to 383p/kg but fell thereafter to a closing average of 354p/kg (down 26p to sit 42p below the average a year earlier). The average dairy cow price remained volatile, but with a smaller swing; from an opening position of £2,063 it fell to £1,791, recovered to £2,052 and fell again to a closing average of £1,886 per head (down £177 overall to sit £28 above the prior year average).
2. The average finished lamb price (SQQ liveweight, old season) has softened marginally this month, post Easter, whilst still remaining comparatively high in the context of the five-year average. From an opening average of 417p/kg, the average price fell back over the course of the month to close at 402p/kg (down 15p, sitting 80p/kg above the average a year earlier).
3. The average UK standard pig price (SPP deadweight) continued to fall this month but by smaller margins. From an opening position of 182.7p/kg dw, it fell to a closing position of 180.9p/kg (down 1.8p/kg overall, 24.1p/kg below the previous year).
4. The average UK all milk prices for February remains the most recent, sitting at 36.07ppl, 1.42ppl below January and 10.02ppl below the average a year earlier.

Other crop news

1. The latest AHDB crop development report, as at 27 April, shows:
 - 75 per cent of winter wheat crops are in good or excellent condition, down from 82 per cent in late March.
 - 70 per cent of winter barley is good or excellent, down from 85 per cent.
 - 81 per cent of winter oats is good or excellent, down from 88 per cent.
 - Despite the impact of the lack of rainfall, all crop types are in better condition than at this time in the last 2 years.
 - 84 per cent of winter oilseed rape is rated as good or excellent, up from 59 per cent at this stage in 2025 and above the ratings for the previous 3 years.

2. The Royal Agricultural University has published the findings of a 10-year arable field experiment comparing plough-based tillage (PT), minimum tillage (MT) and direct drilling (DD). A summary of the findings is:
 - Climate variability, particularly temperature, plays a dominant role in driving inter-annual yield variability.
 - PT provided the greatest stability but at the cost of reduced soil biological indicators.
 - PT and MT produced lower yields during the first 4 year after establishment but yield performance increased over time with DD often achieving yields comparable to or exceeding PT systems, especially in warmer and drier years, reflecting increased soil water use efficiency.
 - When seasonal mean temperatures were below 12.3°C, spring wheat yields were consistently lower under DD but under warmer conditions the reverse was true.
 - After 10 years of consistent tillage management, MT and DD supported significantly higher soil organic matter, improved soil structure scores and greater soil moisture. Total soil mesofauna was almost double under MT and DD driven by increases in Collembola and Acari populations. Nematode abundance was also significantly greater.
 - Anecic earthworms, the deep-burrowing species critical for vertical soil structure, residue incorporation and rooting pathways, were far more abundant under MT and DD.
 - Overall, PT offers reliable yields under a wider range of climactic conditions, particularly in cooler seasons. MT and DD foster richer and more diverse soil communities, improved soil structure and organic matter content and enhance water retention, but may require an establishment period and favourable climate conditions to achieve comparable yields.
3. The UK Flour Miller Varieties Working Group has assigned full UKFM Group 1 status to Arlington, from DSV. Group 1 comprises bread-making varieties which demonstrate consistent milling and baking performance.
4. A study by MDPI Agriculture of a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed English-language journal articles found in the Web of Science, Scopus, ScienceDirect and JSTOR databases, has revealed that precision technologies achieved average input savings of 8-20 per cent and yield increases of 2-6 per cent while returns on investment range between 5 per cent and 15 per cent.
5. A study published in the Journal of Agricultural Economics has suggested that cropland diversity increases of 0.24 species per farm can improve economic and environmental performance. Reallocation, focusing only on increasing production, would increase crop production by £83.76 per hectare and reduce the nitrogen balance by 2.01 kg/ha. Increasing the focus on reducing the nitrogen balance would increase production by £71.88 per hectare while the nitrogen balance would reduce by 4.99 kg/ha.

6. A Chinese study published in Crop and Environment has suggested there should be a shift towards breeding 'high-carbon crops' – cultivators that couple high productivity with enhanced soil carbon input and stabilization. While shoot biomass contributes to soil organic carbon accumulation, evidence highlights the crucial role of root traits in long-term carbon stabilization. Breeding for deeper roots, enhanced exudation and more recalcitrant biochemical composition can significantly increase the efficiency of soil organic carbon accumulation.
7. The Agricultural Price Index for February shows increases of 33.6 per cent for forage plants, compared to a year earlier, and 1.9 per cent for fresh vegetables, but falls of 13.2 per cent for wheat, 7.3 per cent for barley, 16.1 per cent for oats, 3.3 per cent for potatoes, 1 per cent for oilseed rape and 8.7 per cent for fresh fruit. Compared to January, there were increases of 3.5 per cent for oilseed rape and 11.3 per cent for forage plants, but falls of 1.2 per cent for wheat, 1.3 per cent for barley, 1.8 per cent for oats, 1.8 per cent for fresh vegetables and 1 per cent for fresh fruit.
8. An interim report on the Nitrogen Climate Smart project has been published by FarmPEP. It reveals:
 - Pulse crops make up 6 per cent of the UK arable land and are grown by only 25-35 per cent of farms.
 - Pulse crops are used in rotation on average once in every 5 years.
 - Crop rotations are dominated by wheat, barley and oilseed rape. An alternative would be to replace some oilseed rape with a pulse crop or break up two successive wheat crops.
 - Modelling should compare a 4-year rotation of wheat – oilseed rape-barley-wheat with a 5-year rotation to add pulses in year 5.
 - Wheat grown after pulses and oilseed rape achieves increased yields of 0.6-0.9 t/ha.
 - Pulse crop straw will return 20kg/ha more nitrogen to the soil than a cereal crop but only where the cereal straw is baled.
9. An ADOPT-funded project is to bring together the Processors and Growers Research Organisation and growers from the Green Pea company network to investigate the growing threat of viruses, such as Turnip Yellows Virus, to UK vining pea crops. Losses from viruses are estimated to cost growers as much as £65 millions each year.
10. British Sugar has joined forces with Soil Association Exchange to financially reward growers for improvements in the sustainability credentials of UK sugar beet production. 50 per cent of the incentive can be paid in advance to support on-farm changes. Growers can select practices from a range of options to suit their individual farms.
11. Pro-Cam has reported that virus yellows is a higher risk to sugar beet this year than ever before.

- 12.** UPP, a UK food-tech company which creates sustainable, hypoallergenic vegetarian protein products from previously wasted broccoli crops, has entered into a 5-year agreement with East of Scotland Growers whereby ESG will deploy UPP's Harvester, a self-propelled harvesting system, across its farms thereby saving 30 per cent of harvest costs. Harvested material will provide UPP with a proprietary side-stream feedstock unlocking an additional revenue stream from biomass that would otherwise have gone to waste.
- 13.** Rothamsted Research has predicted that 62 per cent of the eastern region's sugar beet crops could become infested with virus yellows if drilled prior to 30 March, increasing to 77 per cent for crops drilled from 15 April.
- 14.** According to supplier AH Worth, sales of Cavalo Nero have risen by 17 per cent by volume in the past year and 12 per cent by value due to an increased interest in the consumption of fibre.
- 15.** While the Food and Drink Federation had previously expected UK food inflation to end 2026 at around 3 per cent, it has forecast that it will reach at least 9 per cent by the end of the year.
- 16.** A collaboration between LettUs Grow, the John Innes Centre, the Quadram Institute and the University of Bristol has demonstrated that pea shoots grown using Advanced Aeroponics can deliver the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin B12 in a single 15-gram serving at an additional production cost of less than 1p per bag. The system delivers a nutrient-enriched mist directly to plant roots suspended in air, allowing precise control over B12 application.
- 17.** Vertical farming and agri-tech firm Fischer Farms has distributed 1.3 tonnes of leafy greens and herbs to charities across London via food surplus charity City Harvest.
- 18.** Fieldwork Robotics Ltd has received £3 millions in funding including a £2.2 millions investment round led by Elbow Beach, to accelerate farm adoption of its autonomous harvesting technology and transition from the technology validation stage to commercial trials. Production robots are to be deployed in a 2-year harvesting-as-a-service programme with Place UK in Norfolk and Littywood Farm in Stafford.
- 19.** Source.ag, the data and AI platform for professional greenhouse horticulture, has launched Harvest Forecast for pepper cultivations. Results from pilot growers at Harvest House and Jansen Paprika's show the AI model cut average forecast error at the 3-week horizon by over 40 per cent.
- 20.** Fieldwork Robotics has partnered with Dynium, a Northamptonshire based company specialising in the design and manufacture of fully autonomous vehicles for polytunnel and other off-highway applications. Growers will benefit from greater choice in base navigation platforms to power Fieldwork's harvesting payload.

21. Wageningen University & Research is to build a simulated greenhouse environment in which robots and tomato plants interact realistically to overcome differences in conditions and plant growth that change with each harvest, making it difficult to replicate exact test conditions time after time.
22. For the 4th year running, the Co-op has become the first retailer to sell exclusively British strawberries.
23. WineGB has announced a relaunch of Sustainable Wines of Great Britain, its independently audited sustainability certification scheme. The scheme now has 79 members and 41 WineGB certified producers. 43 per cent of the UK planted hectareage is certified by the scheme.
24. Chinese scientists have used epibrassinolide, a synthetic analogue of brassinosteroid plant hormones, to accelerate grape berry coloration, boost anthocyanin content, enhance sugar accumulation and promote softening through cell wall modification.
25. The 40-hectare Rivenhall greenhouse project at Bradwell in Essex has been granted planning permission. The project is expected to cost £150 millions and create at least 400 direct jobs. At full capacity it could produce 28,000 tonnes of tomatoes a year, 7 per cent of the UK's imports. 90 per cent of the facility's heat and all of its electricity will be sourced from the adjacent Indaver Integrated Waste Management Facility.

Other livestock news

1. Defra has awarded a contract to expand badger vaccination across England to Farmcare Solutions, a joint venture between IVC Evidensia, Obligace, UK Farmco and VetPartners. In the first year, the vaccination project will focus on south Oxfordshire, north Worcestershire and north Shropshire.
2. The British Cattle Movement Service has reported that, in the period 2021-25, 56 per cent of the national cow kill was of dairy cattle.
3. The Scottish Government has announced that, for the period 1 June to 9 September, animals moving from a BTV-3 restricted zone to Scotland must be PCR-tested for bluetongue disease within 7 days of the movement.
4. During April, cases of bluetongue disease BTV-3 were confirmed in Cornwall, Powys, Devon, Gloucestershire, East Sussex, Derbyshire, Wiltshire and West Sussex.
5. AHDB has published a new edition of the Nutrient Management Guide, RB209.
6. During February, with comparisons to a year earlier:
 - Milk available to processors increased by 0.3 per cent to 1,150 million litres.
 - Liquid milk production fell by 0.6 per cent to 437 million litres.
 - Cheese production rose by 0.2 per cent to 39,300 tonnes.
 - Butter production fell by 0.3 per cent to 14,700 tonnes.

7. Recent milk price announcements include:
 - M&S increased its price by 0.81ppl.
 - Sainsbury's reduced its price by 0.41ppl.
 - First Milk increased its cheese contract price by 0.5ppl.
 - Lactalis added 0.52ppl to its cheese contract price.
 - Saputo reduced its cheese contract price by 1ppl, the 5th consecutive month of a price fall.
 - Wensleydale reduced its cheese contract price by 0.2ppl.
 - Arla's conventional milk price has increased by 1.76ppl taking the price to 35.83ppl and the organic price to 56.31ppl.
 - Barber's Cheesemakers has increased its price by 1.55ppl to 33.6ppl.
8. A first case of Foot and Mouth Disease has been reported in north-western China.
9. During March, average butterfat increased by 0.1 per cent, compared to February, and by 1.8 per cent compared to a year ago, to 4.45 per cent. Average protein fell by 0.4 per cent, compared to March, but rose 2.2 per cent compared to a year ago, to 3.49 per cent.
10. Cyprus has confirmed a further 47 outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease in the month to 17 April. This includes the first outbreak of FMD SAT1 in a herd of 4,000 domestic pigs. In the same period, Greece has confirmed 21 further cases.
11. During March, with comparisons to a year ago:
 - UK prime cattle slaughterings rose by 1.9 per cent to 173,000 head.
 - Beef production rose by 2 per cent to 75,000 tonnes
 - Sheep slaughterings rose by 10 per cent to 1,076,000 head.
 - Mutton and lamb production rose by 11 per cent to 26,000 tonnes.
 - Pigmeat slaughterings rose by 7.9 per cent to 925,000 head.
 - Pigmeat production rose by 11 per cent to 89,000 tonnes.
12. Muller has given a number of producers 12 months' notice of termination of their contracts. It has also announced that, with effect from 1 July, any milk supplied in excess of the supply in the comparable month in 2025 will be paid at the ingredients price.
13. The new Rare Breed Survival Trust's Watchlist priority category includes White Park cattle, Original Population Lincoln Red cattle, Boreray sheep and Soay sheep. Concerns have also been raised over Hackney Horse and Pony, Cleveland Bay horse, Northern Dairy Shorthorn cattle and Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs.

- 14.** The Royal Veterinary College, in association with NoBACZ Healthcare, has surveyed 421 farms into the incidence of orf in sheep and goats. The survey has revealed that 88.8 per cent of respondents reports orf lesions with treatment costing £5 per affected lamb and £100 per affected flock. Topical antibiotic sprays were used by 65.2 per cent of those surveyed, 26.7 per cent used injectable antibiotics while 22.7 per cent used both forms of medication. Only 34.5 per cent reported using pain relief in affected animals and only 23.8 per cent consulted a veterinarian.
- 15.** The Agricultural Price Index for February shows an increase of 6 per cent for cattle and calves, compared to a year ago, but falls of 8.3 per cent for pigs, 1.5 per cent for sheep and lambs, 21.3 per cent for milk and 0.9 per cent for eggs. Compared to January, there were increases of 0.3 per cent for cattle and calves and 1.8 per cent for sheep and lambs but falls of 2.6 per cent for pigs, 16.7 per cent for poultry and 3.8 per cent for milk.
- 16.** The Pork Environmental Roadmap has been developed by an industry-led steering group facilitated by AHDB and is designed to guide environmental progress across the industry. The roadmap is structured around 7 strategic priorities:
- Net carbon
 - Air quality
 - Water stewardship
 - Slurry, manure and nutrient management
 - Biodiversity
 - Waste and recycling
 - On-farm energy
- An action plan for 2026 to 2030 has been created and progress will be monitored through regular five-yearly life cycle assessments.
- 17.** A study conducted by the Arkansas Agricultural Experimental Station, published in Phys Org, has suggested that phytochemicals from rosemary and oregano given to weaned pigs supported favourable gut health and growth performance later in their lives by preserving microbial diversity to improve nutrient utilisation. The study aims to replace antibiotic growth promoters.
- 18.** Alongside the British Veterinary Poultry Association, the British Veterinary Association has called for enriched cages for laying hens to be phased out due to their negative impact on the welfare of the animals.
- 19.** During March, with comparison to a year earlier:
- UK commercial layer chick placings rose by 3.2 per cent to 3.7 million chicks.
 - Broiler chick placings rose by 3.2 per cent to 100.6 million chicks.
 - Turkey poult placings rose by 13 per cent to 700,000 chicks.
 - Turkey slaughterings rose by 21 per cent to 500,000 birds.
 - Broiler slaughterings rose by 1.9 per cent to 94.8 million birds
 - Total poultry meat production rose by 3.2 per cent to 170,500 tonnes.

20. During April, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was confirmed in commercial poultry units in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire (5); Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire; and Market Rasen, Lincolnshire;
21. Mandatory housing measures for poultry and captive birds were lifted on 9 April.
22. During March, a further 37 cases of Newcastle Disease were reported in Germany although there has been no geographical spread. The first new outbreak since December has been reported in Spain. While cases continue in Poland, the frequency of new cases has reduced.
23. During the first quarter to 2026, 273 million dozen eggs were produced for human consumption, up 0.3 per cent on the December quarter and up 6 per cent compared to a year ago. The average farmgate price was 154p per dozen, up 3.1 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively. The production of egg products totalled 21,900 tonnes, up 24.1 per cent and 44.6 per cent respectively.
24. 2 Sisters Food Group has committed to redevelop its chicken feed to replace 23 per cent of imported soyameal with British-grown oilseed rape and beans, purchasing 150,000 tonnes annually and injecting £50 millions into the British agricultural economy. The change is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 670,000 tonnes representing a reduction of 20 per cent in Scope 3 emissions for the group.

VIII Inputs/Supply businesses

1. The Agricultural Industries Confederation has written to the Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs outlining where targeted Government action is required, with specific reference to the following:
 - Access to finance and farmer cashflow.
 - Consideration of a national fertilizer recording system.
 - Clarity over the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.
 - Clarity over sanctions for Russian-owned European production facilities.
2. The Agricultural Price Index for February shows falls of 1.4 per cent for seeds, compared to a year ago, 1.6 per cent for energy and lubricants, 4.9 per cent for chemicals and 2.9 per cent for animal feeding stuffs but increases of 11.2 per cent for fertilizers, 0.2 per cent for veterinary services, 5.4 per cent for equipment maintenance and 2.1 per cent for buildings maintenance. Compared to January, there were falls of 0.8 per cent for energy and lubricants and 0.1 per cent for animal feeding stuffs but increases of 3.7 per cent for fertilizers, 0.4 per cent for chemicals, 0.5 per cent for equipment maintenance and 0.4 per cent for buildings maintenance.

3. A report published by FAS Scotland proposes a novel solution for clubroot which affects 52 per cent of oilseed rape fields causing yield losses of between 10-100 per cent. Spores, which are protected by an outer layer of complex polymers, can remain viable in the soil for up to 20 years but germination may be triggered by the growing of a brassica crop. In research, the growing media was bioaugmented with chitinous food waste, including crab shell waste, frass and exoskeletons derived from the black soldier fly industry, all rich in chitin. Polymer chitin can induce resistance in some plants against pathogens. The highest level of disease reduction occurred in the media containing exoskeletons while crab shell waste had the least impact on growing performance. The research study will continue to find the optimum solution.
4. Biobest has launched new Aphidoletes-System packaging designed to improve the performance of the gall midge *Aphidoletes aphidimyza* for biological aphid control. An integrated yellow sugar strip provides new emerged adults with an immediate energy source helping to extend lifespan, improve flight activity and increase egg-laying.
5. The Peat-Free Pathway initiative has been launched as an umbrella programme to align research, innovation and delivery across supply chains, creating a clear pre-competitive approach to remove peat used for growing media. The British Leafy Salads Association, British Herbs, Brassica Growers Association, Plant Propagators Ltd and the UK Mushroom Growers Association have all backed the initiative.
6. BASF is to invest €40 millions in modernising and expanding its seed processing facility in Nunhem, the Netherlands.
7. A report led by British Apples & Pears and funded by Defra's ADOPT programme is being carried out on two commercial orchards in Kent to determine whether enhanced soil amendments can deliver stronger early tree growth and more resilient orchards. The trial uses 'charged' biochar, pre-loaded with nutrients and combined with beneficial fungi, applied directly to planting holes.
8. UK crop biostimulant developer SugaROx has been selected for the inaugural H.A.R.V.E.S.T. AgTech programme, a global initiative led by The Yield Lab in the US, to accelerate the development and commercialisation of next-generation agriculture technologies. SugaROx will work with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Innovate and F3 Local to test its biostimulant in tomato field trials in California.
9. Elsoms Seeds Ltd is to make a significant investment into a new Innovation Centre in Spalding.

Marketing

1. Provisional data for 2025 has been published on UK trade in Food, Feed and Drink:
 - The total value of Food, Feed and Drink exports increased by 5 per cent to £25.7 billions at current prices but fell by 0.9 per cent after adjusting for trade price inflation.
 - The total value of imports rose by 6 per cent to £67.8 billions and by 5 per cent in real terms.
 - In real terms, exports of meat and meat preparations increased by 3 per cent to £2.362 billions; dairy and birds' eggs by 7.3 per cent to £2.505 billions; cereals and cereal preparations by 5 per cent to £2.516 billions; coffee, tea etc. by 6.4 per cent to £2.068 billions; animal feed by 7.7 per cent to £1.278 billions; oilseeds by 30.4 per cent to £58 millions; and oils and fats by 11.1 per cent to £764 millions. However, there were falls of 7.5 per cent to £1,988 billions for fish and fish preparations; 7.5 per cent to £967 millions for fruit and vegetables; 7.1 per cent to £424 millions for sugar and sugar preparations; 4.9 per cent to £2.592 billions for miscellaneous edible preparations; and 5.5 per cent to £8.183 billions for beverages.
 - In real terms, imports of meat and meat preparations increased by 9.2 per cent to £9.314 billions; dairy and birds' eggs by 6.4 per cent to £4.576 billions; fish and fish preparations by 11.3 per cent to £3.739 billions; cereals and cereal preparations by 2.9 per cent to £7.046 billions; fruit and vegetables by 3.1 per cent to £15.049 billions; coffee, tea etc. by 17.6 per cent to £7.552 billions; animal feed by 3.8 per cent to £3.502 billions; oilseeds by 10.6 per cent to £1.059 billions; and oils and fats by 3.6 per cent to £1.99 billions. However, there were falls of 6.9 per cent to £1.795 billions for sugar and sugar preparations and 4 per cent for miscellaneous edible preparations to £4.675 billions.
2. According to Worldpanel by Numerator, grocery inflation in 4 weeks to 22 March was unchanged at 4.3 per cent.
3. Responsibility for the Groceries Code Adjudicator is to be transferred from the Department for Business and Trade to Defra on 1 July.
4. According to the Groceries Code Adjudicator's annual survey, the number of suppliers experiencing a code issue during the past 12 months increased by 2 per cent to 32 per cent, although, over 50 per cent reported no issues with the 14 designated retailers. The most common issues were:
 - Issues with retailer processes for promptly resolving invoice discrepancies.
 - Suppliers incurring significant costs because of inaccurate forecasting.
 - De-listing without reasonable notice.
 - Delays in payment.Compliance scores ranged from 69 per cent to 98 per cent with Waitrose scoring the highest for the second year in a row.

5. Worldpanel by Numerator UK has published data on red meat foodservice in the year to 22 March:
 - Beef volumes fell by 3.7 per cent with takeaways down 8.5 per cent.
 - Volumes of Asian offerings increased by 5.9 per cent and Indian by 4 per cent.
 - Burger volumes, which make up 48.6 per cent of the total, fell by 0.3 per cent.
 - Volume falls were recorded in Italian, 2.7 per cent; meat-centred meals, 11.3 per cent; sandwiches, 6.4 per cent; savoury pastries, 5.5 per cent; and Mexican, 20.3 per cent.
 - Lamb volumes fell by 3.4 per cent although average prices increased by 10.5 per cent.
 - Volume increases were seen in Asian, 36.1 per cent and meat-centred meals 1.7 per cent.
 - Volumes of kebabs, which make up 51.3 per cent of all lamb volumes, fell by 3.3 per cent.
 - Volume falls occurred in Indian, 8.3 per cent; burgers, 46.3 per cent; savoury pastries, 27.2 per cent; sandwiches, 12.6 per cent; and salads, 2.2 per cent.
 - Volumes of pig meat fell by 3.5 per cent while average prices increased by 4.8 per cent.
 - Volume increases were recorded by burgers, 34.3 per cent; sandwiches, 2.4 per cent; Asian, 15.7 per cent; Mexican, 23.5 per cent; and salads, 21.4 per cent.
 - Volume falls occurred in savoury pastries, 8.4 per cent; breakfasts, 6.7 per cent; meat-centre meals, 5.1 per cent; Indian, 23.9 per cent; pizza, 12.2 per cent; and Italian, 0.8 per cent.
6. In the 12 weeks to 22 March, Ocado increased grocery sales by 12.3 per cent; compared to a year earlier; M&S by 9.5 per cent; Lidl by 9.6 per cent; Waitrose by 5.8 per cent; Tesco by 5 per cent; and Aldi and Morrisons by 2.3 per cent. Asda sales fell by 0.5 per cent but this was its best performance since April 2024.
7. The Livestock Auctioneers Association has reported that throughput across England and Wales increased to 10.76 million head with turnover up £554 millions at £3 billions.
8. Data published by Worldpanel by Numerator covering the 12 weeks to 22 March reveals:
 - Beef spend increased by 8.8 per cent with volumes down 6.5 per cent but a price increase of 16.4 per cent.
 - Primary beef volumes fell by 9.1 per cent with mince down 8.2 per cent.
 - Processed beef volumes fell by 6.8 per cent with burgers and grills down 7.7 per cent.
 - Added value beef volumes fell 0.6 per cent although sous vide volumes increased by 1.9 per cent.
 - Lamb volumes fell by 1.7 per cent while spend increased by 9.2 per cent due to an 11 per cent increase in average prices.

- Volumes of primary lamb cuts fell 1.9 per cent although roasting leg increased by 4.9 per cent.
 - Processed lamb volumes fell by 1.8 per cent, mainly grills.
 - Added value lamb volumes increased by 0.9 per cent with marinades up 9.9 per cent.
 - Volumes of pigmeat fell by 2.3 per cent with spend down 0.6 per cent.
 - Primary pigmeat volumes increased by 1.1 per cent with roasting up 2.2 per cent.
 - Volumes of pork mince increased by 39.3 per cent.
 - Volumes of processed pigmeat fell by 4.3 per cent although gammon increased by 8.6 per cent.
 - Added value pigmeat volumes increased by 16.8 per cent with sous vide up 22.2 per cent and ready-to-cook up 40.4 per cent.
- 9.** The Co-op Group and Southern Co-op are to join forces to ‘create a co-operative society with greater scale, resilience and impact for members, customers, colleagues and communities across the UK.’ If approved, the Southern Co-op’s 300 food, funeral and Starbucks coffee branches in the south of England would join the Co-op Group’s 2,300 food stores, 800 funeral homes and a wholesale business supplying 8,000 outlets.
- 10.** Veg Power, the UK non-profit campaign group known for Eat Them To Defeat Them and Attack the Snack, has launched Breakfast in Colour. The campaign will champion the inclusion of fruit, vegetables and beans in ‘the most important meal of the day.’ While the breakfast cereal market is worth £3 billions a year, fruit only makes it into 6 per cent of breakfasts while vegetables and beans rarely feature.
- 11.** Data from Worldpanel by Numerator suggests that take-home grocery sales increased by 0.9 per cent in the 4 weeks to 19 April, compared to a year earlier. Spending on promoted items increased by 7.8 per cent while spending on full-priced products fell by 0.2 per cent. The proportion of spending on promotions has increased every month since July 2023 and now stands at 31.3 per cent.
- 12.** M&S has moved 22 staple vegetables into its ‘Remarkable Value’ and ‘Dropped and Locked’ ranges to entice more family shoppers and increase its food business. The range includes cabbages, brussel sprouts, leeks, garlic, courgettes and sweet potatoes.
- 13.** Data published by NIQ Homespan POD, Total GB on dairy retail in the 12 weeks to 21 March shows:
- Volumes of cows’ milk fell by 1.6 per cent although spend increased by 6 per cent. Whole milk volumes grew by 2.7 per cent but all other types recorded falls.
 - Cows’ cheese volumes increased by 1.9 per cent with spend up 3.1 per cent. Cheddar fell by 0.5 per cent but cottage cheese, soft white cheese and kids snacking all saw growth.

- Volumes of cows' butter fell by 0.9 per cent with spend down 0.1 per cent. Block butter volumes increased by 7.1 per cent but spreads fell by 4.4 per cent.
 - Volumes of cows' yoghurt, yoghurt drinks and fromage frais grew by 6.6 per cent with spend up 8.6 per cent. Plain yoghurt volumes grew by 27.1 per cent with fat-free up 10.9 per cent.
 - Cream volumes grew by 2 per cent with spend up 9.9 per cent. Double cream was up 3.8 per cent.
14. Lidl is the first recipient of the Best British Apple Launch Award 2025 for its strong support of the apple and pear sector at the start of the season in the period September to November.
 15. With effect from 1 April, the UK and Japan have formally recognised the equivalency of each country's organic livestock standards. British producers will only need a single UK organic certification to sell organic livestock products in both countries.
 16. According to Worldpanel by Numerator, Lidl's market share increased to 8.4 per cent in the 12 weeks to 22 March, its highest ever, after attracting over 500,000 new shoppers. Spend at Ocado increased by 11.3 per cent; M&S by 7.3 per cent; Sainsbury's by 4.5 per cent; Tesco by 4.3 per cent; Waitrose by 3.8 per cent; and Aldi by 1.2 per cent.
 17. M&S has signed up to two decade-long contracts with ABP and Dunbia who will work with 3,500 M&S Select Farmers in a contract worth £2.1 billions. It will have exclusivity across its Wagyu Gold, Aberdeen Angus Gold and organic beef ranges.
 18. According to RSPCA Assured, 72 per cent of consumers would be reluctant to eat at a restaurant or café that used imported or lower welfare eggs. Further, 80 per cent of consumers believed food venues should be required to publish the source of animal products used in recipes with 74 per cent suggesting the source should be British.
 19. Sainsbury's has increased its long-term partnership model to 62 British berry farms with new 5-year contracts with Angus Soft Fruit, Chambers, Soft Fruits Direct, Jo Sims and Dyson Farming.
 20. AHDB data has revealed that beef mince continues to dominate the minced meat category with 70 per cent of households purchasing the product during the past year. 73 per cent of mince meat purchases comprised beef.

Miscellaneous

1. During March, the Agricultural Engineers Association has reported the registration of 2,134 tractors, up 45.6 per cent on a year ago and the year to date up 34.4 per cent.

2. The UK Packaging Pact has been launched. Wrap has developed a cross-sector agreement to ‘help industry manage costs and address the part packaging plays in this perfect storm.’ The Pact covers every type of packaging material, including glass, paper, cord, metal, plastics and bio-based materials. The World Bank has published What a Waste 3.0 which suggests that no change will result in global waste increasing to 3.56 billion tonnes by 2050, a 50 per cent increase from the current level.
3. Dame Helen Ghosh has been named as the preferred candidate for the post of Chair of the Office for Environmental Protection. She has been Master of Balliol College, Oxford since 2018.
4. Ali Capper is to leave her role as executive chair of British Apple and Pears Ltd to become chair of British Berry Growers.
5. With effect from September, Tesco is to increase the number of schools participating in its Free Fruit & Veg for Schools programme from 500 to 1,000, with the intention to double this in 2027. According to Tesco, 73 per cent of parents and carers say their child is more likely to eat fruit and vegetables when they can choose it themselves while the same percentage believe making food fun or visually creative encourages children to try more.
6. A survey conducted by the Church Commissioners of its tenants, covering 32,400 hectares, has revealed that 60 per cent have adopted or are starting to adopt regenerative farming practices. 83 per cent of its tenants have a positive view of regenerative agriculture, although over 50 per cent considered it made no difference to productivity, while 94 per cent were actively importing biodiversity on their holdings. 96 per cent were reducing, or had stopped using, insecticides, 67 per cent were using min-till or no-till techniques and 56 per cent were growing cover crops to support soil health.
7. Middlesbrough, Brighton and Hove, Bristol and Cambridge have each been given £155,000 by Defra as part of a pilot scheme to increase public procurement of food from local and smaller businesses.

Postscripts

1. Three friends are stranded on a desert island. After a few years, they find a magic lantern buried in the sand. When they rub the lamp, a genie appears granting them each one wish. The first guy steps up and says, "I wish I was back at home." Poof! He disappears. The second guy steps up. "I wish I was at home, too." Poof! He disappears. The third guy looks around and sighs sadly. Then he says, "I'm lonely. I wish my friends were here."
2. A man walks into a bar and orders a whiskey. He asks for a straw, and the bartender says, "Don't worry, these glasses are very clean." The man replies, "Oh, I know. But I promised my wife I'd never put my lips on another glass of whiskey."
3. A wife got so mad at her husband that she packed his bags and told him to get out. As he walked to the door, she yelled, "I hope you die a long, slow, painful death." He turned around and said, "So, you want me to stay?"
4. A cruise ship passes by a remote island, and all the passengers see a bearded man running around and waving his arms wildly. "Captain," one passenger asks, "who is that man over there?" The captain squints at the island and says, "I have no idea, but he goes nuts every year when we pass him."
5. A fellow was walking along a country road when he came upon a farmer working in his field. The man called out to the farmer, "How long will it take me to get to the next town?" The farmer didn't answer. The guy waited a bit and then started walking again. After the man had gone about a hundred yards, the farmer yelled out, "About 20 minutes!" "Thank you. But why didn't you tell me that when I asked you?" The farmer cocked his head to one side and said, "Didn't know how fast you could walk."
6. A London barrister representing a wealthy art collector called his client and said to him, "Paul, I have some good news and I have some bad news." The art collector replied, "I've had an awful day; let's hear the good news first." The barrister said, "Well, I met with your wife today, and she informed me that she invested £5,000 in two pictures that she thinks will net her a minimum of £15-20 millions. I think she could be right." Paul replied enthusiastically, "Excellent! She is a brilliant businesswoman! You've just made my day. Now I know I can handle the bad news. What is it?" The barrister replied, "The pictures are of you with your secretary."
7. John visited his 90-year old grandpa, who lived way out in the country. On the first morning of the visit, John's grandpa prepared a breakfast of bacon and eggs. John noticed a film-like substance on his plate and asked, "Are these plates clean?" His grandpa replied, "They're as clean as cold water can get them. Just go ahead and finish your meal." For lunch, Grandpa made hamburgers. Again, John was concerned about the plates, as his appeared to have specks of dried egg on it. "Are you sure these plates are clean?" he asked. Without looking up, Grandpa said, "I told you before, those dishes are as clean as cold water can get them!" Later, as

John was leaving, his grandpa's dog started to growl and wouldn't let him pass. John said, "Grandpa, your dog won't let me get by!" Grandpa turned to the dog and said, "Cold Water, go lie down!"

8. A truck driver is starving and stops at a biker bar to eat. He goes inside, sits down at the bar, and orders a beer and some food. Right after he's served, a biker gang enters the bar, eager for a fight. One walks up to the trucker and slaps his hat off. The trucker takes a sip of beer. Another biker swats his food off the bar. The trucker takes another sip of beer. So, a third biker grabs the beer and pours it over the trucker's head. The trucker gets up, pays the bill, and leaves. The biker leader says, "That trucker sure wasn't much of a fighter." The bartender glances out of the window and says, "He's not much of a driver either. He just drove over a row of motorcycles."

The sun has been shining, but that's about all!

The OECD has published Taxing Wages 2026 and UK residents will not be surprised at its contents. The report provides a cross-country comparison of the labour tax wedge, total taxes on labour paid by employees and employers, less cash benefits received by working families, as a percentage of labour costs. As one would expect, a higher tax wedge reduces incentives to work and hire.

Pertinent extracts are:

- For a single worker earning the average wage, the tax wedge rose in 24 countries, fell in 11 and remained the same in 3, all compared to 2025. On average the tax wedge increased by 0.15 per cent to 35.1 per cent.
- The largest increase in the category above was 2.45 per cent. Guess where... the UK
- The only other increases above 1 per cent occurred in Estonia, 1.95 per cent; Germany, 1.34 per cent; and Israel, 1.09 per cent.
- The tax wedge increased for all other 7 household types with the largest increase being for the single parent of two children earning 67 per cent of the average wage with an increase of 0.52 per cent to 16.3 per cent. The largest increases occurred in Slovenia, 5.6 per cent; the Slovak Republic, 4.7 per cent; and yes, you guessed right, the UK, 4.3 per cent.
- On average, the tax wedge for all 8 household types is at its highest since the COVID-19 pandemic and at its highest for 7 of the 8 categories since at least 2018.
- The tax wedge in the UK now stands at 32.4 per cent. If you find this depressing, consider moving to New Zealand, 20.8 per cent; Switzerland, 23 per cent; or Australia 27.9 per cent. Avoid Belgium, 52.5 per cent; Germany 49.3 per cent; France 47.2 per cent or Italy 45.8 per cent.

If you decide to stay, rest assured, you will be taxed all the way to the grave. A study from the Institute of Economic Affairs has revealed that, in 2024, the UK received over 3.5 per cent of its total revenue from wealth and wealth-related taxes, the highest of any OECD country.

Between now and then, your depression may lead you to join the 28 per cent of Britons who have a mental health disorder such as depression, anxiety or addiction, the highest of the 44 OECD countries. The cost of health and disability benefits has now hit £56.9 billions annually, up from £37 billions before the pandemic with 10 per cent of the population claiming appropriate benefits and more people consuming anti-depressants than all of the OECD countries bar two.

It's time we had some good news, but it may be a long wait!

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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