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# TOMORROW'S FARMER



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YOUR NEWSLETTER FROM CREDITON MILLING COMPANY

# Your milk is in demand!

**Suddenly you dairy farmers are wanted again! After several years where processors were not, in the main, recruiting because they had more than enough milk the tables have turned in favour of you again, and there is now A LOT of recruitment activity!**



Chris Walkland

WP Walkland Partnership

Why else would prices rise in huge chunks - the largest being Freshways for May with a rise of 4p to 40p. It's the biggest rise in 'normal times' (i.e not Covid affected times) on my records.

The South West milk field is one that is seeing much recruitment activity, with Saputo coming ever-further up country and other companies defending their current farmers and wooing new ones. I'm not sure that includes Arla yet – a month or so ago I wrote in British Dairying that I gave it a 50:50 chance and I'm not wavering from that. Muller is perhaps the most vulnerable as its direct farmers (who are not involved in any futures traders or the Lidl fixed price deal) only have to give three month's notice.

Driving the new and welcome processor love-in are very low milk volumes, of course, with the latest figures putting volumes down over 3.3% over the last 50 days compared to last year. UK volumes are down 2.5%. Demand for milk, in contrast, is still very strong. Given the current costs and supply chain issues for the likes of feed and fertiliser and it's hard to see these volumes moving much.

So how does the South West milk field currently fare compared to others? Well normally the South West has one of the best paying milk fields. But it isn't now, for May, with Freshways jumping to 40p for its South and Midlands milk field (mainly).

At the time of writing the South West is now in the lower half of the regional table, in fact, but that's because other processors here have yet to react and announce their May prices. And they will. Processors like Crediton Dairy, for example, Saputo and Arla all have good track records on price. If they lag the pack they don't do so for long.

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DAIRY

POULTRY

BEEF & SHEEP

FORAGE

## Your milk is in demand! *continued from page 1*

Quite whether some or even most will get to 40p for May I'm not sure, though – it will take some pretty big jumps and June might be a more likely timeframe as it will take a few months before the benefit of current soaring commodity price rises end up in processors pocket's and then in yours.

That's also assuming that the benefits DO end up in their pockets, that is. The big unknown is how well the processors are doing in getting the money out of customers. And it's very tough.

Although the current spot price for mild cheddar is around £4300/t, and on the rise to £4,500/t say some traders, there is very little traded on the spot market. Longer-term contract prices for cheese will not be on the spot basis, but many contracts are linked to milk prices so cheesemakers should be able to pay over 40p. The current AHDB MCVE price is just short of 46p for February before all costs and margin, and this is based on a mild price of less than £4000/t. The MCVE will continue to rise for March to around 50p I think. Butter and powder returns also continue to climb, with February's AMPE price at just under 49p. Since

that figure was published butter and cream prices have soared, and SMP prices have continue to rise. The AMPE price for March should be well over 50p before costs and a processor margin. Thus even after a lot of deductions for those there's enough left to pay 40p. Or at least there should be!

And here we return full circle to recruitment again. Because if the processor's don't get the money out of their customers to pay the going

rate they will lose farmers and milk volume to others and those customers will then not get the products they need. It's a vicious circle that starts with them and revolves around you. But try telling end use buyers that – a lot simply do not believe what they are being told by processors, and think that the spring flush will come to their rescue as milk volumes rise and prices fall. They are in for a big surprise. A very big surprise indeed.



## How do you like your eggs?



**There are a wide variety of eggs on offer on the market today. However, in the 50s and 60s, white shelled eggs were all you could find on the shelves.**

The white-producing breeds were more efficient layers but over time consumers acquired the perception that they were like white bread, less nutritious and less wholesome, while brown eggs were almost exotic. The UK is one of the only countries in the world, alongside Canada, where brown eggs surpass their white shelled friends. New to the market over the last few years is a green shelled egg, and most recently eggs with green yolks. These

eggs are, however, very hard to come by and are being brought to the market by a small business in the South West. These green yolked eggs were trialed on a number of consumers across Cornwall in the first instance and have now been rolled out in corner shops across Devon and Somerset also.

Egg consumers across the world tend to favour a dark rich orange yolk over that of a pale yellow. Much of this is consumer perception when in reality

the colour of the yolk has no effect on nutritional value. The new eggs filled with a green yolk, however, contain pigmentation from spinach and have been proven, therefore, to provide high levels of iron.

Chefs across the South West have described this new egg revolutionary and advise that it is best served with ham.



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POULTRY SPECIALIST

# Thoughts on lamb finishing for the 2022 season

Building a robust system, that can also be flexible enough to account for changes in the lamb price and input costs can be invaluable when looking at lamb finishing and maximising margin. At this point a lot of the hard work has been done but as an old farmer once told me 'you can't get wheat without a combine', so thinking about how you turn your lambs in to cash is important.

The use of forage crops such as Kale, stubble turnips, swedes and the like can be a fantastic base for a finishing system. The use of forage crops will lend itself to a grass rotation system without the use of cereal crops but also sits very well with the modern thinking in terms of Regen Ag, minimal tillage and maintaining soil structure health etc.

## The benefits of forage crops

- **High Dry matter Yield per Ha providing lots of feed**
- **Consistent nutrition level when grass quality is dropping off**
- **Suits reseeded systems encouraging minimal tillage**
- **Can be mixed with companion crops such as grass, chicory and plantains to stabilise soil**
- **Highly palatable to drive intakes**
- **Reduces need to concentrate feed to finish lambs fast**
- **Relatively easy to establish with minimal tillage**

Forage crops yield high volume of dry matter per hectare (kale 8-10t DM per Ha) meaning more lambs can be



**The 2021 to 2022 sheep season is well under way with lambing for many just around the corner and for some only just a bleary eyed memory. I want to look forward towards the end of season at lamb finishing.**



finished on a smaller acreage. They also boast 10.5+ ME, 16+ crude protein and are highly palatable therefore driving intakes and maximising utilisation.

There are added health benefits as Dan Leyman, partner at The Vale Vets comments "From a worm control point of view forage crops provide low risk grazing, helping to maintain growth rates and reduce the need for worming (saving both time and money as well as reducing the risk of anthelmintic resistance developing). The size and type (new lay or fields previously grazed by lambs) of any run back area provided may influence any challenge there is."

## It important to consider the following

- **Initial thought given to type of crop depending on time of year utilised**
- **Ensuring mineral requirements are met (some forage crops can lack iodine and some trace elements)**
- **Provision of early creep feed for lambs to get them off to a good**

## start and reduce pressure on ewes to maintain body condition

- **Area of grass run back should be provided**
- **Allow opportunity for creep feeders to be provided IF NECESSARY especially late in the season as dry matter of fresh crop can drop and a requirement for starch needed to increase fat covering**
- **Field rotation to ensure optimal crop utilisation**
- **Field infrastructure, fencing and access to water etc**

If structured well a forage crop based finishing system can yield high levels of lamb per Ha with considerably reduced costs helping to increase margins.

For more information contact Joe Banks or CMC forage team members to discuss in more detail.



**JOE BANKS 07885 367440**  
BEEF & SHEEP SPECIALIST

# Prevention rather than cure is the key to lameness success

**We always know what our neighbours are up too, whether it's a new bit of machinery or a new shed that's gone up. But often we get asked on farm: "How does it work elsewhere?", "Have you seen this before?", "You must see all sorts on your travels."**

With so much negativity in the press at the moment and input costs rising with the uncertainty of what output prices will be, it's time to share some positive findings which we see out on your farm's day in day out. Maybe you can pick up some tips and think **'why haven't I thought of that before?'**

Last week I was chatting away to Franklin Tucker from Stibb Cross about how everything on the farm was going. Franklin has around 55 Friesian and Holstein Friesian cows. He grazes in the summer, feeds round bale silage in the winter alongside a high energy maize ration in his breast parlour. The cows are averaging 7850 litres in 305 days, 4.3 butterfat, 3.25 protein, SCC 80 and bactoscan is always under 10. Franklin goes out to work in the week so only has weekends, mornings and evenings on the dairy farm. Because of this, his time is very valuable to him.

Lameness at East Stibb farm is a credit to Franklin. He runs at very low percentage; between 2 – 4% lameness. The national average is 20-30% (source NADIS). His three reasons as to why his lameness is low are :

1. Regular foot bathing
2. Investing in a road brush
3. A good crush

Looking at his foot trimming results they indicated more sole ulcers as lameness cases. Realising his tracks and yard had stones he bought a stone brush which he uses to sweep up with once a week. This has rapidly reduced his lameness cases and an extra 10



minutes spent doing this once a week saves a cow in the crush for half an hour. He has also invested in a good foot trimming crush. Franklin said, **'If you don't enjoy it you just don't want to do it!'**

One of our nutritionist John Cann advises Franklin on farm. John said he has seen a big change in Franklin and the cows are a real credit to his system. John says that Franklin, like many others, shows us it doesn't matter how many cows you have and what system you decide to run, it can work and be profitable.



Franklin says **'John has helped a lot on the farm to get the best from my cows, his knowledge is second to none'.**

Franklin says he's got to think 'What could go wrong?' when he is away from the farm in the day. His dad is there in case of an emergency, but he has to think what could go wrong and how he can prevent it. **Prevention rather than cure.** He said he has **'learnt the hard way'** feeding cheaper concentrate diets which actually work out more expensive to his business than higher spec concentrates. The extra yield and fertility he now gets from his cows pay for the extra feed price. Per litre of milk, it is also cheaper than what on paper is a cheaper ration.

Silage is also very important. Forage is your cheapest feed on farm when you get the most from it. A ruminant's diet is mainly forage, and you can only feed that rumen once! It does not matter what treats you feed your animals if 75% of the diet isn't its best to value it does not matter what super-duper cake you feed it's not going to outweigh the rest of the diet.



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