

Sustainable Dairy Farmer of the year awards 2024

Ryan Dobson, Colley Farm, Somerset

Farm facts:

- 240 cow dairy herd
- Grassland system focused on increasing milk yields while reducing inputs
- Investment in cow and calf housing to improve animal health and welfare, paired with preventative herd health planning and vaccinations leading to reduced antibiotic usage
- Efficient nitrogen use is achieved through utilisation of sulphur to improve nitrogen uptake, analysis of slurry and regular soil sampling
- Utilisation of herbal leys across grazing platforms to improve soil health and animal health



Sustainable Dairy Farmer of the year awards 2024

Ryan Dobson, Colley Farm, Somerset

Nominated by farm vet, Cormac White at FarmVets SouthWest

Two times Somerset Grassland milk from forage winner, Ryan Dobson at Colley Farms is consistently producing between 4,500 and 5,300 litres from forage.

“As part of their exceptional grassland management they’re also undertaking regular soil sampling and slurry analysis to reduce artificial nitrogen applications, with the use of sulphur helping improve nitrogen uptake.

“His thorough vaccination programme and improved cow and calf housing has helped to reduce antibiotic use and improve health statistics.”



Sustainable Dairy Farmer of the year awards 2024

Matt Penny, farm manager for Oliver Grant at Carters Lodge Dairy, West Sussex

Farm facts:

- 330 milkers, autumn block calving, 65% conception rate
- Extended grazing and supporting pasture as CO2 sink
- FEC routinely and reduced worming treatments on youngstock
- Very low culls; all cows not in autumn block are sold as spring calvers
- No down cows and attention to detail in transition
- High milk from home grown forage and little imported cake
- Highly successful infectious disease control management
- Awarded new Aldi Arla contract



Sustainable Dairy Farmer of the year awards 2024

Matt Penny, farm manager for Oliver Grant at Carters Lodge Dairy, West Sussex

Nominated by vet Matt Dobbs, farm vet at Westpoint Farm Vets in Horsham

The farm operates a 6 week whole herd block calving system with conception rates of 65% .

“This is a farm that gives amazing attention to detail. In addition to having low stress, happy cows, they have reduced antibiotic use, FEC routinely and have reduced worming treatments on youngstock.

“They are a team who prove that teamwork, planning and organisation and 'doing things right' yields results.

“They are strong advocates of health planning with regular vet visits taking place in the breeding season and planning meetings at the start of the season.”



Sustainable Dairy Farmer of the year awards 2024

Lucy Noad, Woodhouse farm, Wiltshire

Farm facts:

- Family run 160 cow dairy unit, autumn block calving, averaging 9,700 litres per cow
- Winter months are used to focus on health, welfare and peak production
- Extended rotational grazing creates more sustainable system for both staff and cows, reducing cost of production with focus on producing milk from home-grown feeds
- Breed their own replacements with a focus on high milk quality
- Embraced First Milk's regenerative farming policies and have a high regen score of 67, placing them in the top 10%
- Pioneer farm for First Milk's Naturally Better Dairy Group, supplying Yeo valley with conventional milk
- Long term focus on enhancing biodiversity, improving soil health and creating a positive impact on animal welfare and the wider community



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Lucy Noad, Woodhouse farm, Wiltshire

Nominated by Sarah Bolt

Technical Knowledge Exchange Manager at Kingshay

“The farm has embraced First Milk’s regenerative farming policies with a regen score in their first year of 67, against a target of 50. This places them in the top 10% and reflects their long-term focus on sustainability.

“The family firmly believe that demonstrating the sustainability of regenerative dairy businesses should lead the way for the industry to embrace the changes necessary to become a sustainable and positive force for the future.”

