

## **INTRODUCTION**

Wherever you fly someone is earning a living from the land you are flying over. The countryside, whatever you think, is a factory and sooner or later you are going to fall through its roof. How you get on, when you land on the shop floor, depends on your knowledge and attitude

## **CATTLE**

Cattle have been bred over many years to be, in the main, well-natured, hardy providers. From the farmer's point of view they are reasonably easy to look after, straightforward to keep and usually recover well from injury or illness. That is not to say they all behave in the same way and, by their nature, can be divided into three main groups.

**Black cows.** These include the Limousin Cross, Welsh Black, Galloway, Angus and the pure bred Limousin, which although brown falls into the same category. All these breeds and their crosses are generally stronger and more likely to be highly strung. When frightened or startled then they are more likely to panic and run.

**Brown and black cows with white markings.** These include the more common Hereford Cross, Friesian Cross and the Jersey/Guernsey Cross. Also included in this group are the pale continental breeds such as the Charolais and Simmental. These animals tend to be more inquisitive and are less prone to panic.

**Dairy cows.** Mainly the traditional black and white Friesians (in the south), red and white Ayreshires (further north), brown Devons and occasionally the lighter brown Jersey and Guernsey. Of all the cattle these are probably the best natured and calmest, being used to regular human contact and the noisy environment of the milking parlour. However they are the most prone to injury when frightened.

Dairy herds all same colours close to the farm, moved twice a day for milking. Muddy well-worn, well-used gateways, roads and verges leading to the farm. In winter in large low buildings with adjacent yards. Slurry pit close to buildings. Milking times regular, 5.30 in the morning from 4.00 o'clock afternoon. Damage to the udder-mastitis. Serious disturbance can lead to fall in milk production.

Milk and beef production dependant on calf production. Calving all year mainly in the summer. Winter indoors. Beef production often inside from start to finish. Mortality about four to five per cent and similarly five per cent fail to get in calf. 9 month gestation period most vulnerable one month before and one month after calving. Mineral deficiencies caused by the increased milk production. Stress aggravates. Maximum yield 3 months after calving, 4 gallons a day. Dairy herds average 60 head, 200 not unusual.

Beef herd, wintered in. Muck heap away from farm beef herd. Look for silage clamps, bales, towers. Straw and hay in barns, stacked outside. Fencing good indicator. Different sized or coloured cattle, calves often left to run with heifers. Heifer- first time calver, usually two years. Often away from the farm. Trackways will tend to radiate out from the gateway.

Cattle shelter from wind and rain where shelter is sparse lay down. On hot days they are most active in the morning and after eight o'clock in the evening. When frightened bunch together. Younger animals and dairy herds may run towards a threat. Not necessarily frightened, if run away they are. Cattle naturally inquisitive.

## **SHEEP**

All breeds are much the same in their outlook and behaviour. Although quite hardy in the main they do not recover well from injury and the list of ailments that inflicts them is endless. Even though they tend to bunch up at the slightest provocation they are not easily upset.

Established flock has leader-rally round and move off with when disturbed. Newly weaned off lambs no hierarchy when agitated tend to bunch into tight circles. Avoid low flying over grazed moors. Injury to single animals can go undetected resulting in a slow, lingering death. Lambs, separated from their mothers likely to perish

Most at risk 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after lambing. Gestation 21 weeks. Lambing end of January to early April. The further north the later it is. Large flocks have two, or three lambing periods lambing may be continuous from January to April. Disturbance results in panic with death and injury to the lambs from trampling. Mixing up the ewes and lambs in large flocks after serious disruption can result in losses through mis-mothering. Lambing inside large low sheds or open barns clad in plastic windbreak, or stacked bales. In the hills the sheep are brought down to the valleys. Lambing outside, lambing field, large bales and trailers provide shelter. Poly-tunnels and tents.

Breeding-tupping, August until November. Bright colours on backs ewes indication ram in the field. Rams dangerous treat with extreme caution.

May and June shearing. Early summer worming, vaccinating, weaning off or dipping. If in for lambing shearing December or early January.

Electric fence or netting. Deterrent not proof. Beware of electric fences laid across apparently empty cut fields. Sheep will always try and shelter from wind, rain and heat so beware of them lurking behind hedges or under trees in large concentrations. Sheep fields tend to be higher than cattle fields and have well-worn random

straggly trackways across them closely cropped. Sheep can be out most of the year turn up anywhere, often a long way from the farm.

Specialised breeds such as Blackface, Jacob and Wensleydale are becoming increasingly popular and can be quite valuable.

Goats, often tethered. Panic easily. Goats for milk production in low sheds with access to pasture. Fencing is generally pretty strong. Orchards, Farm Shops and large back gardens pet goat. Billy goats are disgusting. Nanny goats with kids can be unpredictable.

### PIGS

There are many varieties of pigs, mainly hybrids. Legislation relating to pig breeding has resulted in more and more breeders changing to outdoor pig units. Pig prices fluctuate dramatically throughout the year. The intensive breeding methods employed, if disrupted by disease or disturbance, can result in huge losses for the pig farmer that may not be recovered for months. Of all the types of farming today this is probably the most financially unstable.

Breed at any time of the year, indoors or out. Gestation 116 days upto three litters a year. Pigs farrow inside require a pen or hut of their own. Produce twelve piglets, easily crushed even in the natural course of events.

Outdoor pig units. Breeding cycles carefully controlled by fenced enclosures. Grid and radials Low level high voltage electric fencing is used. Pigs bed in the late afternoon rise in early morning. Seek shelter in hot weather spend most time outside if given the chance. Foxes will take outdoor piglets often causing mayhem in the process. When frightened bunch together and bolt. Run until exhausted go to ground. Unstoppable rounding up takes days. Boars particularly dangerous if frightened. Assuming escaped pigs are recovered the task of sorting them out again and repairing fencing can take days. Abortion and absorption of the foetus cannot be detected until farrowing is almost due so claims can be protracted and high.

Indoor units very compact rows wide low roofed buildings feed hoppers attached muck heap nearby. Slurry pit is often sited a short distance from the unit. Litters tend to be larger in indoor units. Disease can be catastrophic. Take notice of warning signs.

Coloured pigs such as the Tamworth and Saddleback tend to be less nervous and are often kept as pets or in orchards with other animals.

Wild Boar expensive to buy and keep. Usually kept in well-fenced woods and copses. Once free they can be impossible to catch and potentially dangerous, especially the boars.

### HORSES

Horses and ponies can be found anywhere in the countryside or town. Their nature can be as diverse as their respective owners. Horses can be spooked by anything, often throwing their rider and bolting. There are however some simple rules that will help you spot horses and minimise the risk of disturbing them.

*Individual horses and ponies* small paddocks connected to detached properties edges of villages and towns. Well-worn fields with shelter, abandoned road cones and red and white jumps scattered about are good indicators. Single stables and field shelters frequently back onto gardens. Fencing.

*Livery yards and stableyards* Riding schools-stables menage indoor school. Vehicles and horse trailers. Muck heap well used close to the stables.

*Racing Stables* not a horse to be seen, gallops-Do not drive on them. Exercised twice a day, early morning in the afternoon.

*Stud farms* well-kept fields, poplars and neatly cut hedges for shelter and post and rail fencing everywhere. The stallions are stabled, mares kept out.

All horses behave in the same way when frightened. although the level at which they become alarmed is different. In the field they will charge about sometimes bucking and neighing. In extreme cases they will try and jump out of the field causing injury to themselves. Injuries almost always involve a visit from the vet. Broken bones often mean the animal will have to be destroyed. Beware roads, brideways.

### POULTRY

Chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese are all reared in much the same way. There are of course the scatter-brained farmyard varieties that you find rooting around in hedgerows or on allotment sites. Of these you should never underestimate cockerels or geese, they can inflict serious injury.

Commercial free-range birds in low roofed well-ventilated buildings often with sky lights and a large south facing high-netted pen attached. food hopper. Mucking out straight into spreader. Rearing and egg production in controlled environment. Low roofed with hoppers, windowless large ventilation. Panic results in death from suffocation, crushing and trampling as the birds try to flock. It is worth noting that losses often occur in such controlled environments as a result of power cuts and although the houses have shutters that can be removed to improve air circulation disruption to the environment can seriously affect production.

Ducks and geese outside large pens arranged in rows with a shed in each of them. There may be 200 or more birds in each pen and disturbance will cause panic and flocking. Injury and death is likely.

Ostriches like all unusual livestock expensive give a wide berth. Can be found anywhere. Very strong pens with a shelter. Live to 80 and breed for 40 years. Do not jump or fly when frightened run.

### **FIELD SPORTS**

In the league table for potential problems and insurance claims, game birds- Pheasants, partridge and grouse, and the disruption of the shoot rates pretty high. Many farmers supplement their income by providing facilities, or rent land, for all types of field sports. Shooting, hunting and fishing to name but a few. The setting up and running of private and commercial shoots, and also fishing lakes is both costly and time consuming and disruption to gamebirds, or disturbing others who wish to enjoy their chosen country pursuit, can only result in animosity.

*Fishing* is the biggest participant sport in the country.

*Hunting*, concentrated gatherings of horses, riders and dogs. Meet is held in the morning range over many miles. Hunting starts in November and runs through to March.

*Commercial and syndicate operated shoots* can be found just about anywhere in the country. Rough shooting for pigeon and rabbit is common to most farms, arable and mixed. Game birds are raised on game farms, often on large estates. Rearing pens in woods. Grouse moors.

*Pheasant and partridge* from October until February and the grouse season, from August 12th to December 12th. Disturbance, upto two months before the season opens, can cause serious disruption to the shoot.

### **PARKLAND AND GENERAL**

Parkland can often be deceptively inviting. However the privacy of the landowner and access to the estate should always be taken into consideration. Large parks are frequently run as part of a much larger estate with a farm manager, and game-keeper. Access can be difficult Often contains livestock, these may be valuable specialised breeds such as Highland cattle, Jacob sheep or deer. High quality beef herds such as Limousin or Charolais are often bred. Until you get close, trees and cover may well conceal such livestock and complicated fence patterns.

Deer farms very high strong fencing. Paddocks will contain around thirty does with a stag. Stags are very dangerous Management of deer is difficult and although reasonably well tempered they are prone to bolting if panicked. Out all year and do not like being penned or cornered.

Local knowledge don't ignore words on maps!

### **CROPS**

It can be virtually impossible tell crop from grass at certain times of the year. This is made doubly difficult when you consider almost everything that grows in the countryside is potentially a crop to someone. There are a few rules that will help but you must never be surprised when seemingly perfect meadow from fifteen hundred feet turns out, at ground level, to be winter wheat or a young crop of spring barley!

Crops drilled in the autumn after harvest. some varieties may be sown in the early spring. Modern equipment allows ploughing and harrowing in one pass with drilling and rolling straight behind. A field in the morning appearing to be stubble is quite likely to be sown by the evening. Small close lines left by a Cambridge roller indicate that the field is sown. Walking and driving on it at this time will not cause any damage. A hard landing followed by a long drag may dislodge seed and spoil the look of the field. Up until early March it is not unusual to see crops being grazed by sheep to promote growth, especially in the north. All crops will be damaged to a degree from spring onwards. That is when the plants are more than six inches tall or you cannot clearly see the soil between the rows. Tramlines, tracks left by the tractors tyres are the best indication of a crop field and its state of growth. If the field is an even colour, has distinct rows and tramlines then it is crop. An evenness of colour across unused gateways is also a good indicator of crop. Some fields, undersown with turnips and kale, broad green-leaved root crops or clover which are used as a fodder crop or strip grazed.

*Hay* is grass that is cut in dry weather and rowed up.

*Silage* is grass that is cut and harvested straight from the field and stored in large clamps, towers or wrapped.

Silage is basically fermented grass that is used as winter feed.

*Special grasses* and lucerne, a clover-like plant, are also grown to enrich feedstuff or for seed. Evenness of colour and no tramlines.

*Turf fields* evenness and shortness regularly rolled and cut. Gateways clean and well ballasted

*Early in the season the rich greens are wheat and barley.* Wheat darker than barley. Wheat has a full clean ear barley has long awns attached to the ear. Turn golden brown. Harvesting in August through to September. Oats, more common in the north, have a very grassy look harvested slightly later. Harvesting depends on two factors, the ripeness of the crop and the moisture content of the grain.

*Specialist varieties* are grown for thatching straw. This requires the more traditional use of a reaper and binder.

*Straw* from combining is baled straightaway. Where it isn't it is chopped into small pieces to accelerate rotting before being ploughed in. Easy to set fire to!

*Oil seed rape.* first crop bush like plant single stemmed plant bright yellow flowers before turning to seed. Later in the season mustard.

Other yellow crops evening primrose and sunflower, both sown as single seeds. Eastern counties acres are planted with rows of daffodils.

*Linseed* delicate single stemmed plant blue flowers, open in sunlight, Last cash crops to be harvested. Other blue is borage grown for the pharmaceutical industry very valuable. In comparison to the cereal crops of wheat, barley and oats, the small seeds of linseed, borage, mustard and rape take much longer to harvest.

*Vegetable crops* such as onions, carrots, cauliflower, cabbages and potatoes are sown in distinct raised rows. Potato crops late in the season often have small white flowers. Most crops can be started under plastic, allowing production to run throughout the year. Peas and sugar beet have a similar mottled green appearance from the air with tramlines often invisible, easy to confuse with set-aside. Early in the season peas have white flowers. Peas like beans when ripe look dead.

*Seed crops* fields left for a couple of years before harvesting and may take look neglected. In the case of grasses, it is impossible to tell them from a hay crop, however, the seed crop can be very valuable.

*Animal feed* for the farms own use. Beans, root crops-kale turnips all appear as dense foliage often broadcast and rolled in. Kale and turnips are often undersown. Beans are one of the last crops to be harvested, the dwarf varieties can often be found still standing in November, and when ripe look dead.

*Maize* is also grown as a fodder crop and sown as single seeds. Throughout the season the distinct rows are clearly visible despite growing over six feet tall. It has strong stem but once broken will die. Cut maize, like oilseed rape, leaves four to six inch very tough stalks.

*Arable farms* can be recognised by the range of large closed storage barns known as stores, large sheds for machinery and often groups of round grain towers called silos. If any livestock, usually a horse or pony, is on the farm it tends to be in a small field near to the farm buildings.

### **CROP MANAGEMENT**

Spraying and dusting require light winds and good weather. Spraying is usually carried out on cool days in the morning or early evening to prevent burning by evaporation. Inhaling spray and dust can be dangerous.

*Insecticides* can be very toxic normal rules of hygiene apply if you become contaminated.

*Desiccants* are used to kill off the foliage of certain crops such as linseed, rape and potatoes to encourage ripening. Wash your eyes and hands with plenty of water.

*Fertilisers* are applied directly to crops and land throughout the year. Muck spreading of grass is carried out throughout the year depending on the weather. Liquid manure can be injected beneath the surface. Phosphates and nitrates are granular and applied by a spreader from mid-March onwards and can be seen as small pellets on the surface. Flaked lime and chalk are applied to correct the pH value of the soil and leave white deposits sometimes in high concentrations.

### **GOLF COURSES AND SPORTS GROUNDS**

Golf courses are easy to spot and with care and consideration can offer a safe landing site. Always try and land on the rough, the area at the sides or between the fairways. If you land on a fairway, if possible, allow the balloon to drag into the rough. Deflate and pack the envelope away as quickly as possible. Under no circumstances land on a green. The damage caused, even with a relatively gentle landing, will take a long time to repair. Do not walk on the greens. Should permission be granted to drive on, follow the instructions to the letter.

When choosing recreation grounds and playing fields similar rules apply. Avoid landing on or driving over the pitches, especially cricket pitches. Avoid landing if matches are in progress. Never assume recreation grounds and playing fields are public property. Most are managed by parish or local councils especially school fields. Leave your details in the club house and report any damage as soon as possible replace any temporary fencing and close barriers when you leave. Beware of young children and people walking their dogs. Most public places take active measures to prevent vehicular access so be prepared to carry out. The biggest problem is usually locked gates or barriers preventing access to the playing fields themselves.

## **BASIC RULES AND GUIDELINES**

1. If you see injured, distressed or escaped animals mark the location on the map and report it to the farmer, as quickly as possible, even though it may have nothing to do with you.
2. Landing close to livestock should be avoided. If you have to, make a steep descent avoiding long burns. Given a choice land before livestock rather than overflying it. Once down deflate as quickly as possible.
3. In cases of emergency or failing light always go for crop. Try and get as close to the edge or gateway as you can. It is much easier to assess crop damage and usually it can be agreed on the spot. Disturbance to livestock can result in subsequent claims being long and costly.
4. Treat all low roofed buildings as containing livestock at all times of the year, even those in the middle of nowhere. Low buildings with hoppers always contain livestock.
5. Livestock kept inside, especially in the winter, is just as frightened by the light of the burner as by the noise. If you have to land near buildings refrain from nightglowing and in all cases always deflate the balloon as quickly as possible.
6. Look for signs of livestock around the farm buildings-stacked bales, muck heaps, livestock trailers and muddy gateways all point to the presence of livestock.
7. Always be aware of the risk of fire when landing in cut fields, do not smoke. Make doubly sure pilot lights are out and there are no residual flames visible before venting. If possible vent with the basket and burner in the upright position.
8. Take care when practising landings over crop. It can appear to the farmer that you have actually landed in it. All crops will be damaged from spring onwards. Crop fields can be identified by evenness of colour, tramlines and undisturbed gateways. If you end up in crop pack the balloon such that you cause minimum damage and use the tramlines.
9. Check carefully for livestock and access before committing yourself to a landing. Remember livestock is most active in the morning and early evening. When cold they will bunch together and shelter behind hedges or under trees, and when hot, seek shade. There is a good chance that if you are too low you will not see them until you have passed over them. Agitated or frightened livestock can often be calmed by calling down to them. If the farmer is in the field or you see a horse and rider give them a deliberate visible wave to acknowledge that you have seen them, you are aware of their presence and are taking as much care as possible
10. You must advise the farmer of any damage to fences, including electric fences, whether animals are present or not.
11. Try and get as close to a gateway or track as possible. Do not drive into the field without the farmers permission. It is important that all gates should be left as found and retie string and replace chains securely where they are used. Follow the BBAC Code of Conduct at all times.
12. Finally choose your landing site with care and always be prepared to fly on.

## **The Country Code-Issued by Countryside Commission**

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work

Guard against all risk of fire

Fasten all gates

Keep your dogs under close control

Keep to the public footpaths across farmland

Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls

Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone

Take your litter home

Help to keep all water clean

Protect wildlife, plants and trees

Take special care on country roads

Make no unnecessary noise

## Farming in the Chiltern Region

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>General</b>												
Hedge cutting												
Ditch maintenance												
Machinery maintenance												
<b>Arable</b>												
Applying fertiliser												
Soil cultivations												
Spraying												
Ploughing "set-aside"												
Drilling Rape												
Combining crops:-												
Barley, rape,wheat, oats,peas, linseed,beans												
Bale straw												
Ploughing & other soil cultivations.												
<b>Stock</b>												
Spring Drilling												
Check,feed & bed down												
Thaw water supplies												
Silage (1)												
Fertiliser												
Silage (2)												
Hay making												
Bale Silage												
Calving												
Thaw water supplies												
Check,feed & bed down												
<b>Lambing</b>												
Lambing												
Sheep shearing												
Sheep dipping												
<b>Poultry</b>												
Day old birds for Xmas												
<b>Pheasants</b>												
Birds in rearing pens												
Birds released												
<b>Horses</b>												
Many horses stabled for winter												
Hunting season												
Hay making												
Stabled horses												
Hunting season												
Show season												

NB. All farms are different. Every season is different. For example, some dairy farms spread calving over the whole year to avoid peaks and troughs in work loads, milk supplies, calf supplies etc. Organic farms have a very different program of work.... no spraying, but more hand cultivations.

## **PRODUCTION FIGURES AND VALUES AT February 2005**

### **CATTLE**

Cattle production - one cow per acre - seven year breeding life

Gestation - nine months. Years calving - average five calves in its life. Calves weaned off - from dairy cow six weeks - suckler calf six months. Average dairy herd - 60 head. Milk yield average - lactation 305 days produces 5500 litres per cow - Age limit at market 30 months

Values

Dairy cow - £720.00

Good calf at one week - £122.00

Weaned calf - £460.00

Full grown beef at 18 months - £700.00 upwards

Commercial Bull - £2500.00 working life five years - One bull per 60 cows

### **SHEEP**

Sheep production per year - stock at five per acre - average 1.45 lambs per year. Gestation - five months. Weaned off - four months, sometimes left on to finish. Years lambing - five years - four or five lambings. Average flock - 224 head

Values

New born lamb - sheep with lamb at foot ('life') £30.00

Finished fat lamb - £48.00 at 16 weeks upto max of about one year

Breeding ewe - £80.00

Commercial ram - £300 (more for specialised breeds such as Blackface, Jacob and Wensleydale).

### **PIGS**

Pig production - six per acre outdoor - 24 per sow per year - 10 per litter raised. Gestation - 119 days. Years farrowing - six litters over two and a half years. Weaned off - three weeks

Values

6-8 weeks - 100p per kilo - weaners at 30kg £30.00

Porker at 16 weeks £60.00

Fat pigs - £80.00

Breeding sows - £180.00

Commercial boar - £400.00 upwards

An outdoor unit of 200 pigs costs around £250.00 per pig to set up excluding land. An indoor unit of the same size costs around £1500.00 per head. Pig prices fluctuate dramatically.

### **HORSES**

Horses - one per acre - Stallions breed upto 20 years mares foal from 3 to 20 years old sometimes longer. Gestation - 11 months

Values

Good pony from - £700.00 up - Good jumping / showing £3500.00 up

Good horse from - £3000.00 up - Eventing / hunting £8000.00 upwards

Stud fees - dependant on stallion and time at stud. Stabling per week - DIY from £25.00 per week

Livery per week from - £120.00 depends on schooling turnout for hunting etc.

Grazing per week from - £20.00

### **POULTRY**

Chickens laying - pullets £2.00 - 52 week laying period returns £11.50 egg money Chickens meat - 46 days to finish - make from 94p per kilo

Eggs at 36p per dozen.

Turkeys - buy in £3.00 - medium finished at 18 weeks (Christmas) £25.00

Geese - gosling £3.50 - finished at 6 months £25.00

Ducks - duckling £2.00 - seven weeks to finish £7.50

Game birds - Pheasants ready for pen at six to seven weeks £2.45 each - Eggs for hatching £35.00 per 100 - Average shoot orders around 500 birds that will have flown the pen and be on the shoot by ten weeks but return for feeding.

Ostrich - Trios one male two females may well have cost the owner £21,000.00 - breed for 40 years. These days better to offer to buy them a replacement!

### **DEER**

Deer production - 2.6 per acre - 81 offspring per 100 hinds. Breeding - one stag to 20-30 hinds - hinds breed 12 years stag 8 years

Values - Red Deer

Breeding hind at 14 months - £150.00

Mature hind - £350.00

Breeding stag - £550.00

Fencing costs around £7.00 per metre inclusive.

## **CROPS**

Wheat milling - £84.00 ton / feed - £62.00 ton  
Yield per acre - 3.00 tons  
Growing cost - £100.00 per acre

Barley malting - £80.00 ton / feed - £62.00 ton  
Yield per acre - 2.5 tons  
Growing cost - £100.00 per acre

Oats - £60.00 per ton  
Yield per acre - 2.25 tons  
Growing cost - £80.00 per acre

Oilseed Rape - £120.00 (oil for margarine/food industry, rest goes for feed)  
Higher prices available for green fuel (contracted)  
Yield per acre - 24cwt  
Growing cost - £120.00 per acre

Linseed - £170.00 per ton (oil for putty, paints, human consumption, big demand in the bread industry etc)  
Yield per acre - 14.5cwt  
Growing cost - £60.00 per acre

Evening Primrose - £1800.00 per ton (oil for pharmaceutical industry)  
Yield per acre - 1.25 to 6cwt per ton  
Growing cost - £110.00 per acre

Borage - £2200.00 per ton (pharmaceutical industry)  
Yield per acre - 0 to 5cwt acre  
Growing cost - £110.00 per acre

Potatoes-Prices vary throughout the year. Highest in early May and for baked potatoes in December. Yield per acre -  
Earlies from 9 ton - later 20 ton  
Gate price average £84.00 per ton.  
Growing costs - £750.00

## **MAIZE**

Yield per acre-15 to 18 tons per acre as silage. Has no real value apart from growing costs. (mainly grown for farmers own use as animal feed) Only real places grown for human consumption are 'pick your own' farms.

## **STRAW**

Small bales - 60 bales per ton - 100 bales per acre - £1.50 per bale  
Big bales - half ton each at eight foot 5-6 per acre - Barley £15.00 per bale / Wheat £10.00 per bale.  
Straw production per acre is similar to grain weight per acre.

## **HAY**

Small bales - - 35 bales per ton (two tons per acre) £2.50 to £6.00 each  
Big bales - half ton each at six foot - £40.00 per bale  
Silage - Annual production 15 tons per acre with three cuts. Wrapped bales £10.00 each

## **TURF**

Production - two cuts over two or three years - usually rented land  
Growing costs - £2000.00 per acre  
Finished turf returns - £5000.00 acre Top quality football, hockey, landscaping £5000.00 per acre General purpose-hardwearing £4000.00 acre

Grass rent - from £45.00 to £160.00 per acre per year - smaller the plot higher the rent  
Arable rent - £60 to £100.00 per acre per year

New payment systems come into force this year which change the way subsidies are paid and is dependant on who collects the rent money and subsidy.

Set Aside is currently 8% and applies to grass keep as well as arable land. It is compulsory.



## **FENCING**

Posts half round - £1.00 to £1.20 three to four inch

Posts round - £1.35 to £1.60 three to four inch

Barbed wire - HT £10.00 per 200m roll - Labour cost only to erect three strands from 1.70p per metre

Stock net - seven strand £25.00 per 50m roll - Labour cost only from £1.70 - erection including materials from £3.00 per metre

Electric fence - materials and labour from £1.30 per metre

Post and Rail - three rails posts at two metre centres labour only from £6.60 per metre -- Posts £2.85 Rail £2.40

Stone walling - rebuilding and new from £13.87 per hour

Hedge laying - £4.90 to £9.50 per metre

Tree surgery from £10.40 per hour

## **MEASUREMENTS**

Acre - 4840 square yards - 0.405 hectare - 640 acres to the square mile

Hectare - 10000 square metres - 2.471 acres - 100 hectares to the square kilometre

Chain - 22 yards

Football pitch is approximately two acres

## **Damage Control-February 2005**

Now I'm often asked just how much damage gets done to a crop when something uninvited arrives in the middle of it? Now of course this need not be a balloon, more often its a car failing to negotiate one or other of the sharp bends that conveniently prevents the road going through the farm. Occasionally its a glider and in the days when crops were higher it was courting couples. The amount of damage caused was, in real terms, pretty insignificant. Take wheat for example. A good crop will produce roughly three tons per acre. At present best price for wheat is around £84.00 per ton. If all goes to plan then an acre should return £264.00 or five pence per square yard. Lets assume the worst and you have a crash landing totally destroying all before you. A 50 yard drag in a basket eight foot wide will therefore have trashed about 133 square yards, or rather, £6.65 worth. Once you take into account the growing cost which is around £100 per acre you are looking at a total of about £9.30. By the time you've got up from your dinner, tromped down to have a look then drag the whole lot out down the tramlines a fee of £25.00 isn't unreasonable. I have to say that the response to damage by farmers varies significantly and I'd most likely resign myself to the fact that in money terms naff all damage had been done so just get the wreckage out of my field and be gone with you! Mind you if it was a turf field you'd dragged across in a similar fashion you would have to cough up about £160! Crops to keep out of at all costs include potatoes, vegetables (peas, onions, cabbages etc.), borage and evening primrose.

An acre is 4840 square yards, about the size of two football pitches. On the OS map, 100 hectares is one square kilometre and there are 2.471 acres to the hectare. To find out the current price get a copy of Farmers Weekly from the newsagent. It is pretty accurate. So there you go, get calculating.