

## FARMING AND PROPERTY BULLETIN 2024 – ISSUE NO. 1

### REPORT ON THE 2024 AUCTION OF HAY AND STRAW



The 63rd Adkin/Thimbleby & Shorland Annual Sale of Hay & Straw was held live and online again this year, with more prospective buyers registered online than were in the room. In an almost complete reversal of last year's trade, the market for straw was extremely strong, due to the difficult conditions at harvest when much straw could not be baled. With no let-up in demand, in spite of the open autumn, the trade was strong and many buyers were left empty-handed. Whilst there is plenty of fodder about, much if it was August made and consequently of relatively low quality. However, given the paucity of good June made hay, well-made August hay still found a trade, reflected in the 67% clearance and £96/tonne average. The range however was from £120/tonne to £47/tonne. Good seeds hay found a ready market with a 100% clearance and top price of approximately £150/tonne. There was some trade for haylage with 4' round bales selling for £17.50 each.

Auctioneer Chris Boreham said: "What a difference a year makes! I was very pleased with the trade overall and with about 1200 tonnes on offer, under the circumstances an overall clearance of 65% was better than I expected, given the large entry of fodder. I think the trade has hardened, probably due to the weather. We have several new vendors this year and I hope they are happy with the overall result. Last year, there was little straw entered, but for very different reasons. I said last year that the weather and its effect on the trade is impossible to predict – and I'm sure that remains the case as we continue to experience such extremes." Thanks go to all parties for continuing to support the sale and to those newer vendors. Principal prices achieved were:

**HAY**  
**Meadow**  
**Big Bales**

Top price Claas 2200 bales £40 per bale (approximately £120/tonne) (Dave Skardon). Average approx. £96/tonne. 67% clearance.

**Seeds**  
**Big Bales**

Top price JD bales £50 per bale (approximately £150/tonne) (N Shore). Average approx. £135 per tonne. 100% clearance.

**STRAW**  
**Wheat Straw**

Top price MF 2260 bales £33 per bale (approx. £108/tonne) (Bitmead Cholsey Partnership). Average approx. £104/tonne. 100% clearance.

**Barley Straw**

One entry of MF 2240 bales £23/bale (approx. £112/tonne).

## SCHEMES



The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) is the leading international conference held in the UK for farming and agribusiness. It takes place in January every year in the historic and inspiring surroundings of Oxford University. The OFC's mission is to inform, challenge and inspire the 600 plus delegates who attend in-person, plus hundreds who attend online, to resonate and be a force for positive change throughout the industry.

DEFRA announced at this year's OFC that the payment rates for both SFI and CSS will be increased by an average of 10%. These payment rates came into action on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Some increases included:

- AHL2- Winter bird food on arable being increased from £732 to £853 per hectare.
- IMP1- Integrated pest management plan increased from £989 to £1,129 per hectare.
- AB10- Unharvested cereal headland has increased from £822 to £1,072 per hectare.
- GS8- Creation of species-rich grassland has increased from £428 to £646 per hectare.

SFI and CSS is being made more flexible and easier to access with a streamlined single application service meaning both applications can be applied for in one go. There is also the capacity to apply for multiple agreements over the same land.

DEFRA is also increasing the number of options on offer within the schemes with up to 50 new options covering water quality, agroforestry, precision farming and more. The introduction of 21 Premium Payments is also being introduced to help recognise actions with the biggest environmental impact and also for combinations of actions that deliver benefits of scale.

Adkin have been involved in successfully submitting multiple applications. If your CSS application is coming to an end and you would like to put in a new application or you are interested in applying for SFI, please get in contact and we will be able to help you navigate your way through the RPA system.

## FLOODING

Winter 2023-2024 has not been kind, with severe weather changes and nine UK storms since September 2023 which have affected everyone. The rainfall has caused flooding in many areas which has adversely affected residential and commercial properties as well as an extensive amount of farmland.

Many properties have suffered water damage over the last couple of weeks, whether that be due to flooding or rainfall. There are schemes and grants in place to help alleviate some of the pressures surrounding the damage caused. FloodRe launched 'Build Back Better' in 2022 which is a joint initiative between the UK insurance industry and the Government to promote the availability and affordability of flood insurance. The scheme allows people, through participating insurers, to claim up to £10,000 for flood resilience over and above the cost of work to repair damage caused by flooding.

The recent flooding from Storm Henk has seen many farmers suffer uninsurable damage to their land, including rotting seeds which have not survived the winter. Farmers could be set to benefit from government grants of up to £25,000 through the Farming Recovery Fund brought in by DEFRA although we are still awaiting further details about the grant. As was the case with Storm Babet, farmers are also eligible for up to £2,500 from the Business Recovery Grant and £5,000 from the Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.

## CONDENSATION AND DAMP IN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES



There is an ever-increasing pressure within residential properties to try and manage moisture levels. Whether the property is a new build with insufficient ventilation or an old cottage that is struggling to keep out the weather, moisture levels need to be monitored.

Damp could be caused by water entering your home through leaking taps or rising through ground-floor walls. Damp usually leaves marks on the paintwork and if left untreated can create mould and damaged areas that need attention. Condensation is usually created from household activities such as showering, cooking, and drying clothes. Condensation doesn't always cause visible damage to paintwork; however, it can grow mould.

Householders are advised to clean mould off surfaces with a fungicidal wash, however, this will not prevent the mould from returning. There are different things you can do to help:

- Keeping the indoor temperature to at least 18 degrees and not letting the temperature drop down during the day.
- Improving circulation by leaving gaps between furniture and walls.
- Ventilating your home so that moisture can escape, this could be done by opening windows and/or vents and turning on extractor fans in rooms that are known to have condensation.

If you rent a property, it is important to treat reports of damp and mould seriously and keep a log of inspections and actions taken should the problem escalate.

## ADKIN STAFF UPDATE



### Jack Burchmore

We are excited to welcome Jack to the team as a new Assistant Surveyor.

Jack joined Adkin in November 2023 having graduated from Harper Adams with an Honours degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management. Jack is working alongside Simon Alden in a wide range of professional work. Outside work, Jack enjoys skiing and playing hockey.



### Ros Murdock

Ros joined the Admin/Secretarial Team as a Property Administrator at the beginning of October 2023.

She will be working alongside the Surveyors in all matters related to our Commercial and Residential Lettings properties, as well as providing general administrative support to the whole team.