



LAMBERT FARM

2023/24 REPORT



PLUMPTON
COLLEGE

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LAMBERT FARM

INTRODUCTION

Lambert Farm covers over 790 Ha and as a fully commercial farm, encompassing a number of intensive and extensive systems, it is the perfect educational backdrop for students on a range of agriculture, food and environmental courses at the College.

The intensive enterprises consist of arable and grassland, a 240 cow pedigree Holstein dairy herd rearing all replacements in house. There is also a 100 sow pig herd taking all produce through to finishing.

The extensive part of the farm is primarily linked to the grazing provided on the chalk downlands. This carries 300 breeding ewes and 50 pedigree Sussex cows taking all produce through to finishing.

276 hectares is capable of growing a range of crops, with cropping primarily cereal based with oil seed rape, wheat and spring barley in a rotation. Intensive grassland and maize are grown in rotation to provide winter forage for the dairy herd, accounting for another 150 hectares.

Plumpton College is part way through a multi-million-pound project investing in state-of-the-art facilities and equipment on its campus, giving students access to the latest technological and best practice developments in land and environment industries. You can read more about what this has meant for the farm within each enterprise report, and on the final page.



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WHERE WE ARE
TODAY

A pure-bred Pedigree Sussex suckler herd of 50 cows and followers are reared traditionally, grazing all year round on the South Downs. The cattle are out-wintered but supplemented with minerals and forage during the winter months.

The cows calve outside in two 9-week blocks starting in April and September in a 50/50 split. Calves are weaned at seven months and taken through to finishing retaining replacements as required.

The decision to split the herd into two separate blocks was to promote student learning and to maintain a steady cash flow throughout the year.

We have recently synchronized our Sussex cows with the use of a CIDR program and top pedigree Sussex semen. This will hopefully produce some females that can join the herd in the coming years.

SUCKLER HERD PERFORMANCE FILE

Breed	Pure Sussex
Weaning Age	6-8 months
Average age at finishing	27 months
Weight at finishing	600kg (approx.)
Carcass weight (kg)	300kg
Carcass classification	0-3+ -0+4-
Average price	£4.10 (kg) dwt

We currently have 11 of our Sussex herd grazing and will have over 30 grazing at the Park by the Spring.

SUSSEX SUCKLER BEEF HERD



The 300 head commercial ewe flock comprises of North Country Mules and home-bred Texel x Mules. These are put to either a Suffolk, Texel or Charolais sire. The flock is grazed on the South Downs and stocked at low rates to comply with specified grazing plans. All lambs are taken through to finishing. Texel x Mule ewe lambs are kept as replacements.

In addition, there is a 50 head Pedigree Southdown flock utilised for conservation grazing and showing at local shows.

FORAGE CROPS

All forage crops are grown for winter feed and sold back to the livestock enterprises at cost. Short (2-3 years) and medium (3-5 years) Leys Permanent Pasture, Maize & Stubble Turnips. Land surrounding the dairy unit is short to medium term grass leys and maize managed intensively in rotation.

ARABLE CROPS

Arable crops are grown, harvested and sold through Weald Granary. The farm has 925 tonnes of storage at Weald Granary. The farm has a wide range of soil types ranging from chalk through to sand and clay. This upcoming season the farm is growing a wheat blend with the intention to feed this back to the cows.

SHEEP PERFORMANCE FILE

Ewe Breed	North Country Mules, Texel x Mules
Ram Breed	Texel, Suffolk, South Downs, Charollais
Number of ewes	300 (250 + 50 South Downs)
Number of rams	8
Lambs sold	500
Average price	£120/head
Average carcass class	R3L
Stocking rate	2.5/Ha

PLUMPTON ESTATE SHEEP FLOCK

Crops grown consist of:

- Winter wheat - feed
- Winter wheat - milling
- Winter oil seed rape
- Winter Barley
- Spring Barley - malting
- Maize - silage

The dairy unit is a 240-cow dairy unit with all young stock reared on campus and excess calves sold to local rearers. The herd are cubicle housed in a building that incorporates slurry storage.

The herd is TMR fed, topped up with in-parlour feeding tailored to individual performance. The herd has less than 380 calving intervals and 28% pregnancy rate.

Investments in Agri-Tech

In the past two years, the College has invested in 2 Lely robotic milking machines, a Juno automated feed pusher and a Discovery automatic barn cleaner.

This has enabled the herd to be split into two groups, 110 milking on robots and 130 milking through a conventional parlour.

Splitting the herds has allowed us to showcase the two different systems used across the UK dairy industry. Cows on the robots are pedigree high PLI animals, emphasizing on producing high litres as efficiently as possible. The remaining animals in our grazing herd are grazed extensively with a focus on milk from forage.

DAIRY HERD PERFORMANCE FILE

Breed	Pedigree Holstein
Average no in herd	240
Milk from forage	2350
Butterfat	3.61%
Protein	3.19%
Bactoscan	18
Cell count	126
Average milk price	36.4p per litre



HOLSTEIN DAIRY HERD

Our mixed system ensures the future farming generation is industry leading upon graduation, capable of utilising different systems in the workplace.

Plumpton College has invested in a new pig production unit, utilising the latest technology available in pig farming. The farrow to finish system has capacity for 130 sows. The college has moved its current 110 sows to their new home which continues to produce farm-assured Red Tractor Pork.

The £1.2m facility has 4 main barns; a sow house, two farrowing houses and a finishing house. The production system is rotate every three weeks. The unit benefits from the latest NEDAP technology, with all data being fed through automatically to the Pig Manager through both desktop and mobile apps. The technology includes continuous feed circuits for different diets, ventilation, sow heat detection and weight monitoring.

The sows are in dynamic groups of 40 or 20 all depending on the size of the animal and have an improved space and access to straw bedding.

The farrowing houses hold 20 sows and their piglets each. Ventilation and food for both the sow and weaners are automatically controlled, including a porridge-type mix of creep with water to ease transition from milk to feed. After 3 to 4 days, crate space is increased so that the sow is with the piglets.

PIG UNIT PERFORMANCE FILE

Average pigs born alive per litter	15.6
Replacement rate	50%
Herd size	100 (approx.)
Average pigs weaned per litter	14.8
Litters per sow per year	2.4
Average total piglets per litter	16.46

The finishing house is split into two growth stages with pigs weaned into single sexes housing a total of roughly 1250 pigs at any time. It includes eight pens of newly weaned piglets and another 40 pens holding finishers.

All waste is stored underground, and undercover, managing ingress of water and limiting run-off through automatic warning systems.

NEW
PIG UNIT

The barn benefits from automatic feeding and ventilation management including roller doors and curtains supplied by Galebreaker Agri. These control optimal humidity and light conditions, all critical to maintaining a high level of pig welfare.

The investments in Lambert Farm have been part of a wider £11m AgriFood project at the College, which has also seen the development of a new Biosecurity Centre. Designed to showcase best industry practice to students and visitors, all entrants onto the farm are now required to pass through this.

In addition to the on-farm investments, the project has seen the recent opening of our brand new AgriFood Centre at the heart of the 2500-acre campus near Lewes. The centre will provide the Agriculture, Food and wider land management industries with up-to-date skills training and support for rural businesses post-Brexit.

The two-story building is collaboratively funded by the College, South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Virgin Money & East Sussex County Council and will create a network hub for knowledge transfer, training, education and business improvement.

It also includes the College's new training kitchen for food skills and bakery training, alongside the College's new butchery training facility.

The College is also ensuring it upholds its environmental strategy and management of the estate as a custodian of the South Downs National Park. The AgriFood Centre has been built to the highest sustainability standards. It carries a BREAM rating of excellent, with a sedum roof, a smart building management system and drawing heat from a biomass plant.

The College is also working towards its new Farm and Estate Strategy, which has already seen a range of habitat and biodiversity improvements through developing a new green swathe, connecting parts of its campus through enhanced tree and hedgerow planting, and creating new habitats across the campus.

In addition to the College's AgriFood Centre, the College offers various study programmes at various levels.

Apprenticeships in General Farm Worker, Crop Technician, Livestock Unit Technician, Butchery and Bakery.

Level 3 Courses (equivalent to 3 A Levels) in Agriculture and Environmental Studies & Conservation.

University Courses in Sustainable Land Management, starting in September 2024.



Training Kitchens

AGRIFOOD CENTRE

