

The Market Report

Professional Ponderings - January 2026

Review of 2025 & Outlook for 2026

Agricultural Team

Last year proved to be a year of continued change and adjustment for the agricultural industry, following Labour's arrival in Downing Street in July 2024 and the subsequent Autumn Budget later that year.

It is fair to say that conditions remain challenging for many within the sector, particularly purely arable farmers. An effective withdrawal of direct payments, exceptionally difficult weather conditions, and the prospect of forthcoming Inheritance Tax changes have all placed significant pressure on farm businesses. That said, there were some encouraging trends. Livestock prices remained relatively strong throughout the year, clearly reflected in the continued success and high levels of activity at Thrapston Market, under the leadership of Jake Wagstaff, who has excelled in his role as Head of Auctions. In addition, landowners received a welcome boost towards the end of the year with the Government's announcement that the APR/BPR relief threshold would increase from £1 million per person to £2.5 million per person (£5 million for married couples) on top of the normal personal thresholds.

Despite ongoing pressure on farm incomes, demand for both arable and grassland appears to remain strong, with tendered rents continuing to remain strong. This appears to be driven not only by traditional farming demand but also by alternative land uses, including Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities, rewilding schemes and maize production for anaerobic digestion.

Agricultural & Development Consultants, Chartered Surveyors, Auctioneers & Estate Agents

Oakleigh House, Thrapston,
Northamptonshire NN14 4LJ

Jake Wagstaff: 07487 526803

CPH: 29/242/8000 NN14 4JU
CPH: 43/266/8000 CV37 8LP

Bletsoes is the trading name of Henry H Bletsoe & Son LLP, a Limited Liability Partnership registered in England & Wales under Partnership Number OC371369. Regulated by RICS. Registered office: Oakleigh House, Thrapston, Northamptonshire NN14 4LJ. We use the term 'partner' to refer to a member of the LLP or an employee or consultant with equivalent standing and qualifications.



As the saying goes, “they are not making any more land”, and it is possibly this underlying scarcity that continues to underpin rental values.

Turning to the land market, there has undoubtedly been some cooling across the region, particularly where interest is limited to purely agricultural buyers. This is largely attributable to uncertainty within the industry, driven by reduced profitability and the forthcoming Inheritance Tax changes, due to take effect in April 2026. Nevertheless, we have continued to secure positive outcomes for both sellers and buyers and, in several instances, have outperformed national agents who have struggled to attract interest, perhaps due to overly ambitious guide prices. It is also worth noting that, while the IHT changes may impact traditional farming businesses, often described as ‘asset rich and cash poor’, agricultural land can still represent a very attractive and tax-efficient investment for buyers with available capital, including those exiting property or other businesses. As a result, there remains a steady level of interest in best-in-class properties. Below are some examples of properties where we sold or agreed sales in 2025:

197.68 (80 ha) of arable land at Barnwell, Northamptonshire

132.85 acres (53.77 ha) of Grade 1 Silt Land at Kirton, Lincolnshire

155.10 acres (62.76 ha) of arable land at Holland Fen, Lincolnshire

182.46 acres (73.84 ha) of arable land, permanent pasture and woodland at Woodnewton, Northamptonshire

105.78 acres (42.80 ha) of arable land at Thurleigh, Bedfordshire

163.26 acres (65.67 ha) of mixed land near Cambridgeshire/Northamptonshire border (private sale)

197 acres (79.72 ha) of arable land near Northamptonshire/Buckinghamshire border (private sale)

If you are considering selling, purchasing, or would benefit from an up-to-date view of the land market, please contact Chris Templar or one of our team in the first instance for an informal discussion.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that a new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) offering will be introduced during 2026. Demand for this funding is expected to be high, potentially with a relatively short application window. While details remain unclear at this stage, we would encourage anyone considering an application to begin preparations now, so they are well placed should the scheme launch later in the year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce our new Apprentice Rural Surveyor, Olivia McNally. Olivia joined the firm late last year and is currently studying at Harper Adams University, working towards a BSc (Hons) in Rural Enterprise and Land Management, with graduation expected in June 2026. We are delighted to have Olivia on board and look forward to supporting her professional development with Bletsoes. I am sure she will become a friendly and familiar face to many of you over the coming year.

As always, if you would like to discuss any agricultural matter, including land sales or purchases, tenancy issues or wider strategic advice, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Agricultural Team on **01832 732241** or by email. We would be very pleased to help.

Chris Templar - Partner



NOTICE

To ensure your entries are listed in the Saturday Store Sale Catalogue, please book in your stock by 3.30pm on Friday.

Thrapston Market Report 2026 Advertising Tariff

Advertising Charges

1/8 Page	£10 Per Week
1/4 Page	£20 Per Week
1/2 Page	£30 Per Week
Full Page	£50 Per Week
+ VAT	

Discounted Rates Available

For further information, or to place and advert, please contact Hanneke Soans on 01832 732241 or hanneke.soans@bletsoes.co.uk

Bletsoes do not endorse any of the products or services advertised in the market reports

Residential Lettings

2025 has been another very busy year for Lettings. As well as managing and looking after our existing portfolio of properties, we welcomed 11 new properties onto our books during 2025, with those landlords preferring to opt for our fully managed service. With ever increasing legislation in the sector, it is a relief for landlords to know they have the support and professionalism of using a reputable agent, such as Bletsoes, to fully manage their property, or properties.

The Bill for Renters' Rights, introduced by the Labour government dominated the Lettings sector throughout 2025 and finally became an Act in October 2025. The progress of the Bill through parliamentary process may have seemed at times slow going. However, before finally receiving Royal Assent the Bill had to go through numerous committee stages, before the final Bill could be agreed.

Although the Act is currently in place in law, the UK Government has confirmed the first phase of reforms will not take effect until the 1st May 2026. The only changes to commence so far are Enforcement & Investigatory powers for local housing authorities – these powers have been in place since the 27th December 2025.

This is just another example of why using an Agent to manage your property or properties will ensure you stay compliant and always the right side of regulations, especially as landlords need to prepare for the reforms being introduced from the 1st May 2026.

In other news, despite the uncertainty during 2025 in relation to the Bill and its passage to becoming an Act, the rental sector remained buoyant with demand continuing to outstrip supply on average throughout the year. Also, Propertymark reported in October 2025 that Rental arrears witnessed by member agents were at their lowest level since 2022, which is welcome news.

Data provided by Propertymark also show that rents rose in October 2025, although the rate of increase is slowing. In October 2025 the average UK rent was 5.5% higher than in October 2024 and 0.4% higher than in September 2025.

As Propertymark members Bletsoes are kept abreast of any new legislation heading our way and we are proactive in keeping our landlords informed and compliant and will continue to do so through 2026.

If you would like further information on how Bletsoes could help you as a landlord, then please do get in touch today.

Teresa Mutton

Residential Lettings Manager



Planning and Development

Despite strong government rhetoric around the desire to increase housing delivery, 2025 was characterised by ongoing planning delays and a challenging market for the sale of development land. Housebuilders faced difficult trading conditions throughout the year, with reduced buyer demand and persistently high build costs. Increasing environmental regulation and sustainability requirements have also had a bearing on delivery across the sector. Consequently, the development land market remained subdued, with some discounting required to secure sales.

As we move into 2026, there is cautious optimism that market conditions will improve, with reductions in interest rates already leading to a more competitive mortgage market. Notably, first-time buyer activity is increasing, which is often a precursor to improvement in the wider housing market. Developer demand for strategic housing sites remains strong and, at Bletsoes, we are currently involved in 15 sites across 6 different authority planning areas with a potential capacity of around 5,500 dwellings where developers have submitted or are about to submit planning applications to take advantage of the government's manifesto pledge to deliver 1.5 million new homes during this Parliament. While it remains highly unlikely that this target will be achieved in full, the government has introduced more pro-growth planning policies, which are beginning to feed through into an increase in planning permissions being granted.

Overall, the indications are that 2026 should be a more positive year for the development industry, provided that wider political instability does not overshadow the agenda.

If you would like to discuss any planning or development-related matters, including opportunities or challenges associated with strategic land, our Planning and Development team would be pleased to assist. Please do not hesitate to contact us to explore how we can support your objectives in the year ahead.

Peter Moore – Partner



Thrapston Forthcoming Events

Thursday 8th January
Prime & Cull Sheep

Saturday 10th January
Store & Breeding Cattle, Calves, Sheep, Goats & Pigs

Thursday 15th January
Prime & Cull Sheep

Saturday 17th January
Store & Breeding Cattle, Calves, Sheep, Goats & Pigs

*For further information on any of the sales
Please contact a member of the Market Team*

An advertisement for CrimeStoppers featuring a group of sheep in a field. The sheep have red markings on their backs: '0800', '555', and '111'. The background is a blue sky with clouds.

Livestock theft.

Do you know who's behind it?

Tell us what you know, and remain 100% anonymous.

crimestoppers-uk.org

CrimeStoppers.
0800 555 111
100% anonymous. Always.

NOTICE

If you would like your stock to be included in the weekly report presale,
please contact the office before 12 noon on Monday.

REPORT FOR SATURDAY 3RD JANUARY

Store Cattle - Auctioneer Jake Wagstaff

A smart first showing for the new year with young cattle a flying trade. 8 month Limousin heifers topped to £1350 with Angus steers to £1250 at 15 months. P Groome Partnership saw their 9 month Angus steers to £790. C P Hankins & Son saw the trade of the day with Hereford steers at 9 months topping to £1120 and 8 month Shorthorn steers to £1080.

Store Sheep - Auctioneer Jake Wagstaff

Store Lambs - prices hold firm, biggest frame leaner lambs have eased slightly while long term smaller frame lambs look the dearest sold, averaging £110.55. CW Webb & Partners topped with Texels to £131, C Hopperton saw a top end trade for mid frame Texel crosses at £126. L Lane saw the trade of the day at £119 for Suffolk lambs. All healthy mid frame lambs sold above £110 plus. Smallest frame lambs £85 to £97.

Feeding Ewes - following on the cull trade meat and big framed ewes in demand, averaging £115.03. J E Beesley & Son topped with meat mules to £140 and leaner meat sorts at £123. R J Garley topped Suffolks at £136 for mid framed lean meat and Cheviot crosses to £132. Smallest frame true feeders sold in the £90's.

In Lamb Ewes - R Stanley saw a genuine flock reduction sale of older ewes with some having lost a corner, scanned in lamb to Charollais and Chartex rams due from 20th February. The Suffolks topped the day at £210 for scanned singles with the doubles seeing £200. Their single Texels sold to £195 with doubles at £200 and mule singles and doubles to £180.

Pigs - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove

Micro Pig Gilts from N Jordan sold to £30. Connington Farms Ltd saw a fantastic trade for their Duroc x Hampshire weaners with gilts at £60 and the boars £58, their Large White Sow and 7 piglets sold for £225 for the family.

Goats - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove

A nice entry of Goats saw a 3 year old Toggenburg x nanny to £170 from L Smith with Golden Guernsey billies from the same home to £82. In Kid Boer nannies from L M Anderson sold to £160 from £120. Pygmy Goats proving ever popular with a nanny kid from L M Anderson selling for £160 and their nanny to £130. L Smith sold pygmy wether kids to £48 from £42 and very small nanny kid to £120.

Calves - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove

A seasonal entry of calves saw trade top at £470 twice for British Blue Bull's from Sunbeam Farms from £380 with heifers at £335. J O Williams saw their British Blue Bulls to £400 from £320 and heifers £340. Only one Aberdeen Angus on offer today a bull calf from Messrs Sunbeam to £395.

Equine

A 19 year old spotted Shetland Stallion to £500.

Smallholders Sale - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove

A very quiet post Christmas sale,

Produce

Perhaps fuelled by Festive overindulgence vegetables in strong demand mixed seasonal vegetables to £4 a box from £3. Brussel Sproats £3. Cabbages £4 from £3.50. Swedes £4. Carrots £4 from £3. Potatoes to £4 from £3. Trays of eggs from £2 to £4.

Sundries - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove

IBC's £20. Chicken Coop £50. Calf Milk Feeders £20. Anti – Freeze £15 a can. Poultry Drinkers to £10. Sheep Shedding gate and Hurdle £70. Wellie Rack £12. Boxes of Logs £5.

Pet Food

A nice entry of 250 Lots. Sacks of Complete Dry Dog Food, Go Dog £15, Wagg £12 from £10. Royal Canin £20 from £12. Earls £10. Harringtons £14. Autarkey £18 from £15. James Wellbeloved £18. Tinned Dog meat Grain Free to £6 for 12 tins. Orlando Pouches £5. Winalot £7. Barking Heads £7
Cat biscuits Go Cat £3 and £15 for a sack. Pro Plan £4. Treats £2 - £5 per lot.

FODDER BEET

Assist & Loading Facilities

Located Cransley, Northants. - Contact John 07774 269403

Located Chatteris - Delivery can be Arranged
Contact Ian 07976605522

SATURDAY 10TH JANUARY

PIGS

GWM

15 Large White Store Pigs

CALVES

J O Williams - TB4

6 British Blue Bulls & Heifers

3-4 Weeks

J E G James

3 Aberdeen Angus Bulls

3-4 Weeks

1 British Blue Bull

3-4 Weeks

1 British Blue Heifer

3-4 Weeks

STORE & BREEDING SHEEP

P T Harris & Son

25 Store Lambs

STORE & BREEDING CATTLE

L A Burton - TB4

5 Limousin Steers

8 Months

W S Jackson & Son

3 Lincoln Red Bulls

8-10 Months

3 Lincoln Red Heifers

8-10 Months

NOTICE

Please ensure Entry Forms and all relevant paperwork accompany your entries when bringing livestock into the Market.

Entry Forms can be found on our Website, in the Market Office or alternatively please contact the Main Office.

Please ensure you sign the Wash Out Declaration Form if you are washing out at home. This is a DEFRA requirement, you will be charged if you haven't signed it. It is in the Market Office!

Bletsoes

— EST. 1881 —

COLLECTIVE MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT SALE

Thrapston Auction Centre
Haldens Parkway
NN14 4QT

Wednesday 28th January at 10.30am

For Entry Forms please visit our website
Or Contact the Main Office on 01832 732241

Important, entries must be returned by
Sunday 18th January to be included in the catalogue

Auctioneer in Charge: Richard Spendlove 07538322474
Auctioneer: Jake Wagstaff 07487526803

Bletsoes

— EST. 1881 —

THRAPSTON LIVESTOCK MARKET SMALLHOLDER SALES 2026

January 3rd

February 7th

March 7th

April 4th

May 2nd

June 6th

July 4th

August 1st

September 5th

October 3rd

November 7th

December 5th

Start: Sundries at 9.30am,

Followed by Produce, Hatching Eggs

For Further Information

Please Contact a Member of the Market Team – 01832 732241

Bletsoes

— EST. 1881 —

Your Future Is Our Business



Rural
Property
Sales &
Purchases



Renewable
Energy &
Compulsory
Purchase



Business
Succession
Planning



Promotion &
Sale of
Development
Land



Livestock &
Machinery
Sales

Our experienced team is here to help you.

Agricultural & Development Consultants,
Chartered Surveyors, Auctioneers & Estate Agents

01832 732241
bletsoes.co.uk