

# The Market Report

## JULY PROFESSIONAL PONDERINGS

It has been quite some time since I have written the Ponderings, but I am pleased to have been tasked with writing July's. With harvest fast approaching, no doubt many clients will be welcoming the recent down pours of rain which have been long overdue, and I hope that it has come just at the right time to make some differences to yields and to help freshen up the grass.

A current and pertinent topic which I thought was worth mentioning in this month's Ponderings, is 'Biodiversity Offsetting' and 'Biodiversity Net Gain'.

With biodiversity and the environment being at the forefront of the Governments 25-year Environment Plan, 'Biodiversity Net Gain' is a concept which has been proposed in an attempt to manage biodiversity and restore ecosystems. The Environment Bill, which is currently still on hold in Parliament due to the recent Covid-19 Pandemic, includes various policy proposals surrounding Biodiversity Net Gain, which is proposed to form part of planning conditions in respect of permissions, requiring developments to deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity after development has taken place (in comparison to the level of biodiversity prior to development taking place). Many Local Planning Authorities have voluntarily taken up implementing such measures, and now that the National Planning Policy Framework makes Biodiversity Net Gain compulsory, it provides opportunities for landowners and managers to create new income streams.

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

Oakleigh House, Thrapston,  
Northamptonshire NN14 4LJ

Alastair Brown: 07885 804450  
Jake Wagstaff: 07487 526803

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

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The principle behind biodiversity offsetting is to compensate for environmental losses which have been suffered as a result of development (whether that be housing, roads or other large infrastructure projects), in a measurable way. These conservation activities are often required when environmental damage cannot be avoided through development, and developers are required to 'compensate' the loss. Offsetting should only be utilised as a last resort, where developers are unable to meet their obligations on site. The principle behind a 'net gain' is that the new site which is provided in place of what has been lost due to development, is of greater environmental value than the area lost.

The proposals set out within the Environment Bill will require developers to submit a biodiversity gain plan when submitting a planning application, which should deal with how the 10% biodiversity gain will be achieved. To aid developers, Local Authorities will produce 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies' to identify sites which would be best placed for biodiversity enhancement and habitat restoration.

Developers use the biodiversity metric which has been created by Defra (based on a habitat survey of the site in question) to calculate the predevelopment biodiversity units and calculate the post development value, measuring the difference in biodiversity. If the development proposals result in a biodiversity loss, then developers will have to source the missing biodiversity units to ensure they meet the 10% biodiversity gain. The additional biodiversity units are created by habitat enhancement on site, or through enhancing habitats offsite (as a last resort). Developers can also purchase statutory biodiversity credits to meet their obligation. The enhancement of habitats off site, is where offsetting comes in, involving management agreements between landowners and developers which within the draft Legislation, are proposed to be implemented for a term of 30 years. It is then uncertain as to whether following the 30-year term land will be restored back to agricultural use, or whether covenants will be put in place which will bind agreements/land use for an indefinite period. It is also not known whether lump sums will be paid to landowners, or whether income could be cumulative (one piece of land could be used in conjunction with multiple planning applications).

Many critics believe that biodiversity offsetting and net gain makes it far easier for developers to avoid using developable areas to meet their environmental obligations, which many say causes more harm to the environment, as developers are not improving the way in which they build to consider the natural

environment. There are concerns that turning nature into a 'tradeable commodity' takes away the basic principle of protecting nature and the environment, given that developers can essentially buy their way out of fulfilling obligations on development sites.

On the other hand, with an ever-increasing demand for housing in the UK, for the Government, developers and Local Authorities biodiversity offsetting and net gain provides greater opportunities to deliver housing needs more effectively and efficiently, whilst meeting the environmental targets set out within the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill. With the Midlands being so active in terms of residential, commercial/employment and infrastructure development, it is most definitely something which will come to the forefront in future, and will undoubtedly form part of our work when management agreements are required, or clients have sites which are of interest to developers.

Following the Prime Minister's recent post Covid-19 policy to 'build new homes' and 'mend the indefensible gap in connectivity between the regions of the UK', it is definitely an area to watch closely, particularly given that a further increase in development will put more pressure on the need to enhance and preserve biodiversity.

On a slightly different note, many of the Shows which we attend on an annual basis have been postponed or cancelled, and therefore many of you may not have seen members of the Bletsoes team for quite some time. However, all our Teams are still very much contactable via telephone and are busy working from their own homes. We are still offering our full range of services, including farm agency. We have seen really positive activity in terms of the land and property market of late. As a firm, we have recently launched a range of agricultural and commercial properties onto the market and have received overwhelming interest and offers which highlights the confidence in purchasers and the market generally, even in the current circumstances. If you are looking to purchase property and have not already registered your interest with us, please do not hesitate to contact us with your requirements, as we will add you to our database to ensure we send you details of properties which we bring on to the market that may be suitable. We continue to agree sales on and off the open market, and therefore, if you are considering the sale of your farm, or part of your property, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Agricultural Team who would be more than happy to confidentially discuss matters with you.

A last reminder to anybody looking to submit a Mid Tier Countryside Stewardship Application, the official deadline is the 31st July 2020, so be sure to submit your applications in good time to avoid any issues.

To anybody who has submitted their HLS annual revenue claim, there seems to be some miscommunication between the RPA and Natural England, whereby many claimants are being contacted and told that they have not submitted their 2020 claims. Having experienced this issue, when contacting the RPA to understand what has happened, they have been able to locate the claim on their system and have confirmed there has been an error. Therefore, if any HLS claimants do receive similar contact, it is most definitely worth contacting the RPA or Natural England to double check that they have received the claim, as currently there seem to be errors within their systems.

I wish everybody a successful, safe, and happy harvest!

*Daisy Miles  
Rural Surveyor*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020**

### **Tuesday 14th July**

Prime, Cull & Store Sheep, Ewes & Lambs

### **Tuesday 21st July**

Prime, Cull & Store Sheep, Ewes & Lambs

### **Wednesday 5th August at Approx 2.30pm**

Field Sale of Store Lambs

**\*\* Entry Forms are Available Now \*\***

*Please forward your entries by Monday 27th July  
to be included in the catalogue*

*Our Sales are Subject to Inspection.*

*Please adhere to all rules & regulations regarding the running of our  
auction sales to ensure we can keep them operating.*

*Keep your distance, Please wash your hands. Spaces have been  
marked in the rings for buyers*

## REPORT FOR TUESDAY 7TH JULY

What a great day at Stratford today, with an increased entry of lambs up by 33% from last week. We would like to give a big THANK YOU to all vendors that support Stratford Market each week. It is fantastic to see the support of local farmers, along with others travelling some distance which all ensures that even the smallest livestock markets in the country are importantly kept in the food chain. "Sell Live & Thrive". With Covid rules being slightly relaxed, vendors are now encouraged to see their stock being sold, BUT ensuring the social distancing requirements are observed. This reassures vendors that we still working for you, and livestock markets are selling in an open and transparent way for all to see.

What we would really like at Stratford is more local buyers to support us. Farm Shop owners or butchers that can boast they are selling locally sourced fresh lamb. If anyone knows of buyers who would like to advertise this opportunity to their customers, we would be pleased to help.

Warning - vendors please note that dead-weight centres can look good on paper, but the promise on slim grids could leave you worse off, with fat or out of spec weights causing severe price deductions, from their promised returns.

### **509 New Season Lambs**

**87 Standards** - Prices reached 210p for Timothy Withers with smart Charollais lambs weighing 39kg; Rollo Deutsch near top spot again with 35kg lambs selling to 207p; lighter lambs from M Digweed sold to 205p and 201p; M Furlong saw his 35kg lambs sell to £70; and Russell Keepence also realised 200p for his 39kg lambs; RS Hawkins sold 36kg lambs at 200p; and at the same price RM Phillips & Partners with their 36.5kg lambs.

To		From		Average	
210p	£81.90	195p	£65.33	201.5p	£75.08

**360 Mediums** - Top price of the day saw A North & Sons realise 224p or £98.56 for their 44kg Texels, with other 1/2 kilo lighter lambs at 219p and their 45.5kg lambs selling to 210p; Will Stanley saw his 40kg lambs sell to 216p; Karen Green sold her 40kg lambs to 215p; Tim Withers sold 41kg lambs to 211p; while Pip & Mark Careless sold their 43.5kg and 44kg lambs to 210p.

To		From		Average	
224p	£98.56	192p	£79.00	204p	£86.93

**60 Heavies** - Nigel Lilley topped this section at 205p or £98.40 with a lamb weighing 48kg; Rob Slatter saw his 47.5kg Suffolks sell to 201p; a 48kg Blue-Texel sold to 200p for Will Stanley; JE Bury saw 200p for his seven 47.5kg Charollais lambs; A North & Sons sold their 48kg Texels to 200p; JW Higgins sold 46.5kg lambs to 197p; RJ White saw 193p for their 47.5kg lambs; and RS Hawkins sold his 47kg lambs to 192p.

To		From		Average	
205p	£98.40	192p	£90.24	198.4p	£94.71

**2 Over 52kg** - R Peach topped this section with a 53kg Texel at 185p or £98.05; and John Bourne & Son saw 175p for their 54kg lamb.

To		From		Average	
185p	£98.05	175p	£94.50	180p	£96.28

### 86 Store Lambs

A great trade for lambs with plenty of buyers with confidence and grass!! If you are short of grass, why not market your lambs rather than having the expense of keeping them on feed or leaving your breeding stock short in the Autumn?

Prices topped at £76.50 for ten Texel lambs from RS Hawkins, with his longer term entries at £66 and £60; Norton Subedge Farm sold their 20 long term lambs to £65; and a pen of 25 Texel x lambs from K & M Farming Partnership sold to £61.

80 lambs already promised for next week, and more are required for buyers with grass - Contact Alastair with your entries.

To	From	Average
£76.50	£60.00	£65.08

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

To make banking easier for our clients in these trying times. We would like to help you by transferring your money via a bank transfer payment directly into your bank, instead of sending you a cheque for you to bank.

Please send your bank account number and sort code to -

Paul Goodwin [paul.goodwin@bletsoes.co.uk](mailto:paul.goodwin@bletsoes.co.uk) or 07753 895716

## 32 Cull Ewes & Rams

It is getting close to the July Islamic festival, if you have some Culls to market, sell them soon. *Predictions - a good trade for the next two weeks then a lull, then possible panic buying for last minute orders (but don't rely on that).* Please contact us with your entries so that we can ensure that all the buyers come to Stratford.

Prices today topped at £90 for a Suffolk from Jamie & Melissa Ironmonger with their Texels selling to £86.50; JE Bury sold Suffolks to £82.50. Mules sold to £75 for RS Hawkins; and £72 from Jamie & Melissa Ironmonger; with lesser Mules selling to £58 for K & M Farming Partnership.

Please contact Alastair if you have some to market, so that he can inform the buyers.

To	From	Average
£90.00	£50.00	£71.40

### S C & J SMITH

Mobile Sheep Dipping, Mowing, Round Baling & Wrapping,  
Digger Work & Tree Shear with Digger Combi Clamp for hire with Load Bars  
Contact: James - 07904 042318 / Chris - 07974 147782

**FCN** THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Here for *you*



**Walking with farmers**

**Supporting the farming community through difficult times**

Find out how you can support FCN by visiting [fcn.org.uk](http://fcn.org.uk)

Helpline: **03000 111 999**

e-Helpline: [help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk)

Website: [fcn.org.uk](http://fcn.org.uk)

Helpline is open 7am-11pm every day of the year.

FCN is working with the Beds & Cambs Rural Support Group to ensure support to farmers continues uninterrupted. FCN has set up a new County Group for Beds & Cambs, and calls to Beds & Cambs Rural Support Group should now be directed to FCN's Helpline instead:

**03000 111 999**

 

# 2020 Vision



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and regular collective sales

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