

Ten years of change growth and challenge

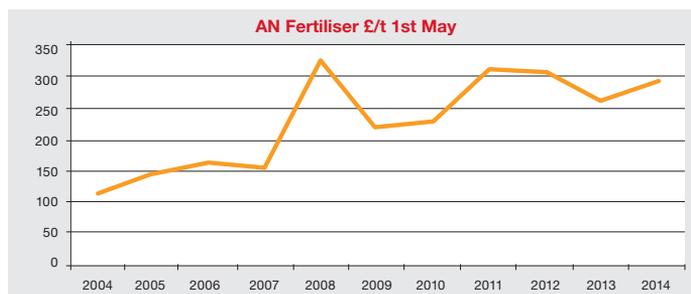
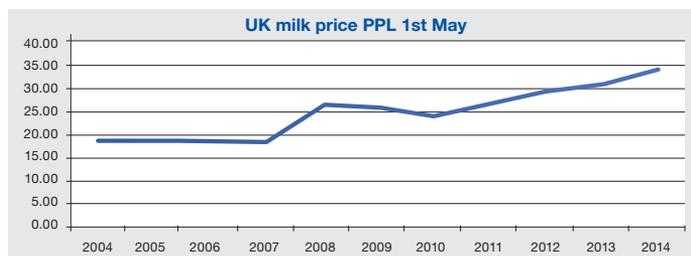
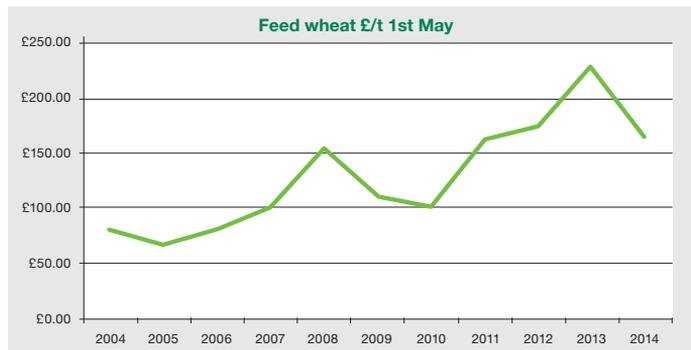
On 1 May, 2004, at Hale Court Tim Calcutt and I took down the G.K. Denniss Farms sign and put up the Complete Land Management sign. We raised a glass to the future and looked happily back on the last seven years during which time I had moved from Tim's green (sometimes literally) assistant to manager of the estate and consultant to a small number of client farms. We spent the weekend swapping desks and moving the paraphernalia of office life so that it certainly felt different even if it didn't really look it.

On 1 May, 2014, we drank a toast to Tim and I raised my glass to the CLM team. It is that team that I am personally most proud of. They are CLM and make it the vibrant moving growing business that it has become.

Over the last ten years our industry has seen massive change, a mere snap shot in historic terms, the roller coaster of farming and business has been relentless in changing our attitudes, our systems, our businesses and our outlook.

In 2004/5 near rock bottom commodity prices led to difficult decisions for clients particularly larger arable tenant farms, diversify, diversify everyone chanted.

CLM endured its own difficult days when the efficient stewardship machine was halted while Defra reorganised their HLS budget. We have felt a little under-diversified ourselves at



Source: dairyco.co.uk

times. We learned, recovered our equilibrium quickly and strengthened the firm.

The farming landscape in 2014 looks very different. The competition for land appears unstoppable, rough unkempt corners are fought over. Grazing tenants

offering to fence large tracts of land in addition to paying the rent. Arable land is like gold dust and the equine market – certainly round Hartfield continues to drive demand.

Reviewing commodity prices over the last ten years (Source:



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dairyco.co.uk) one would think that farming in the Garden of England should be a bed of roses. Shiny tractors in every field and the smartest herd of pedigree Holsteins in every rotary parlour but of course that's too simplistic. Taking just one input as an indicator highlights the reality of business life. While the price of wheat has doubled the cost of AN fertiliser has tripled. That old adage Turnovers Vanity, Profits Sanity and Cash-flows Reality springs to mind. It's all change but nothing changes.

Over the last few months we have seen some very interesting looking cash-flows – good and bad. Some are really making the most of strong output commodity prices and their farming businesses go from strength to strength. Others seem determined to plough the same old furrow downhill and no one's going to stop them. Success comes from careful business management, making hay while the sun shines and building for the future. No rocket science involved, which is why we have become so good at it over the last ten years. Thank you to everyone who's been part of the journey so far.



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