

## NAVIGATE THROUGH THE AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION

### HOW WE WORKED WITH ONE SHROPSHIRE FARM TO STRENGTHEN THEIR BUSINESS FOR FUTURE ROBUSTNESS & ADAPTABILITY

George and Laura Allen run a 150 head, pedigree Holstein herd just out of Whitchurch in Shropshire. Having recently taken over the management of Abbey Farm, they both find great value in benchmarking and often take time to reflect on their herd's performance.

When offered the opportunity to take up our resilience support service, they were keen to make use of the opportunity and evaluate how they can achieve their goals going forward. This includes maintaining the strengths of their herd's pedigree whilst leaning towards higher milk constituents. They too hope to build on and upgrade their farm's infrastructure, and embrace technology in the future.

#### ROBUSTNESS VS. ADAPTABILITY

The Allens have overcome a lot, and made huge progress, since starting their new roles as managers of Abbey Farm: they have successfully won a new milk contract and updated their silage pits, cow tracks and parlour. Despite this, there are still a number of risks to evaluate and overcome, including extreme weather, high feed prices and cashflow.

These risks had been identified by our resilience survey and were addressed by one of our farm consultants, George Peart, who offered support around mitigating these risks to the business. He offered a range of solutions, from investment in technology and water management to forward-buying and adjusting the TMR ration to keep costs down.

During his discussion with the Allens, George also focused on the difference between robustness and adaptability, and how a balance is key for the business. A good example of robustness for the farm team is maintaining a healthy 'margin over purchased feed', despite the rising concentrate costs many farm businesses are experiencing. This shows that they can withstand shocks that are out of their control.

Adaptability, on the other hand, is all about changing your practices based on your farm's strengths and weaknesses. George and Laura showed adaptability by updating their reseeded to improve both grazing and silage fields. This exercise pinpointed a great example of a current investment paying off in the future.

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"The discussions around the survey proved to be just as useful as the recommendations themselves. Being encouraged to look at our business in a different way has really guided us through some difficult business decisions.

Not only has George provided us with some key areas to focus and reflect on, we've also been reminded of how far we've come. It's a great sense of accomplishment."

- George Allen

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GEORGE &  
LAURA ALLEN  
ABBEY FARM  
SHROPSHIRE

#### FARM FACTS



110 pedigree Holsteins,  
calving all year



Typically housed from  
September to April



Owns 136 acres  
and rents 50 acres



Nine-a-side Fullwood  
swingover parlour

#### WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU

Promar's tailored one-to-one farmer advisory service involves an in-depth questionnaire and whole-farm analysis of the business' strengths and weaknesses. Each section of our survey is designed to prompt discussion around what you want to achieve with your farm business going forward.