

Land Business Update

Week commencing 13 October 2025

Farming & food

UK tractor registrations increase for first time in nine months

Registrations in September 2025 were slightly higher than those in September 2024, according to data from the Agricultural Engineers Association. This is a positive sign after registration numbers had previously fallen in every month in 2025 compared with the year before. However, one swallow... total registrations over the year to date are 14% below 2024's levels and 27% below 2023's. As we previously reported, the greatest reductions have been for large tractors (down 30% year-on-year)

Weather outlook is for a dry and mild autumn

September was the first month of above average rainfall for the country since January, with almost 150% of the long-term average rainfall for the month falling. However, soil moisture deficits remain high in central, south-east and east England. Soils are particularly dry in east England while in the north they are now slightly wetter than usual. River flows increased at most sites, with just over half classed as normal for the time of year. Groundwater levels are classed as normal or lower at most sites. The Environment Agency does not [expect the three months](#) from October to December to be wet, with a normal chance of a dry period and with temperatures more likely to be milder than average.

Extreme weather in the 2020s so far has cut UK wheat production by over 7m tonnes

[New analysis](#) from the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) has found that four of the five wheat harvests since 2020 were below the 20-year average. This is due to the weather – extreme rainfall and extreme heat. To put this into the context of food, just over 40% of the UK wheat crop is milled for bread, cereals and cakes, and the 2.9m tonnes of milling wheat lost is the equivalent of four billion loaves of bread, or 64 loaves for every person in the UK, which is more than a year's typical consumption. The ECIU said, 'This is what farming in a changing climate looks like. Extreme weather is making our bread less British, as millers have to turn to imports due to shortfalls in UK production, costing British farmers billions in lost income and reducing our self-sufficiency in our main, staple crop. Although we can do more to support our farmers to adapt to these extremes, only reducing planet warming emissions to net zero can prevent these losses to extreme weather escalating in the years to come.'

Red Tractor accused of 'greenwashing' as Advertising Standards Authority upholds environmental complaint

The ASA has upheld the complaint from River Action that one of Red Tractor's adverts – which said, 'From field to store all our standards are met. When the Red Tractor's there, your food's farmed with care', and ran for two years – implied that the Red Tractor standards 'ensure a high degree of environmental protection'. The ASA ruled that Red Tractor had provided 'insufficient evidence' to support the claims. River Action relied on a 2020 report by the Environment Agency which looked at how many breaches of environmental law there were on Red Tractor farms in the previous five years. The report concluded that these farms were 'not currently an indicator of good environmental performance'. Red Tractor called the ASA's decision fundamentally flawed and argued that the scheme's focus was animal welfare, not environmental standards. However, many supermarkets do refer to the environmental benefits of the Red Tractor standards.

Natural capital & environment

Woodland Water Code being piloted by Forest Research and land managers

Forest Research has been developing a draft Woodland Water Code (WWC), which sets out robust requirements for voluntary woodland creation projects that provide one or more water benefits - protection of water quality, reduction in flood flows and water shading. An initial set of priority maps has been developed for each water benefit so that the WWC can be directed to where water pressures are greatest. The WWC's methodology have also been tested with 29 land managers to assess ease of use, volume of



water credits generated, project costs, cost per water unit and any unforeseen issues. The next phase of the project is now underway, involving further end-user testing and the aim of finalising version one of the Code.

Scotland's muirburn licensing pushed back a second time in wake of severe wildfires



The Scottish Government said the delay until autumn 2026 would provide time to consider how the changes can be implemented in a way which does not affect the ability to respond to wildfires. It comes in the wake of Scotland's largest ever wildfire this summer. Scottish Land and Estates has welcomed the delay and called for further review of the proposed regulations.

Diversity of nature highlighted by 10,000th species recorded at a nature reserve



A rare species of moth - the six-belted clearwing - that mimics the appearance of a wasp to avoid predators is the 10,000th species of wildlife to be recorded at the National Trust's Wicken Fen nature reserve in Cambridgeshire. Wildlife records at Wicken Fen date back 200 years, and 13 species that were new to science were discovered on the reserve during the 20th century. The National Trust said the number of species surged since an expansion of the reserve, which started in 1999, warmer temperatures, which have led many insects to move further north, and more sophisticated monitoring methods. A countryside manager at the Trust said, 'if you give nature the opportunity and the space, it will do remarkable things.'

Rural economy & property

No changes to inheritance tax proposals expected in the Budget

Angela Eagle, the farming minister, said the government is not 'going to move' on the proposals which were announced last October and are due to come into force in April 2026. She said that three-quarters of estates will continue to pay no inheritance tax at all, while the remaining quarter will pay half of the inheritance tax that most people pay.

Join our webinars on navigating inheritance tax reforms – 22nd and 30th October at 7pm

We are hosting two webinars with Clarke Willmott solicitors on the impact of the reforms. They will cover what is changing in April 2026, the potential IHT liabilities of different sized farms, its affordability from farm profits and practical actions that can be taken now to mitigate the tax charge. The sessions will feature Nick Watson, Head of Private Client at Strutt & Parker, who has more than 30 years of experience in advising landowners on business management and strategic estate planning, and Philip Whitcomb, who is a partner at law firm Clarke Willmott, with particular expertise in advising on succession planning and the structuring of farm businesses.

Proposed overhaul of the home buying and selling process

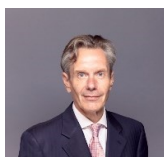
The government has started a 12-week consultation with the aim of making transactions faster and more reliable, with lower risk of fall throughs and higher professional standards. The main [proposals](#) are below and our blog on the implication is [here](#):

- A mandatory requirement for sellers to provide searches and property condition assessments prior to marketing.
- A Code of Practice that sets minimum standards for all residential property agents and, possibly, mandatory qualifications to ensure compliance.
- The creation of digital property packs for homeowners to store current and historic information on a property.
- The introduction of binding agreements in England, bringing the system more in line with those of Scotland and the US.
- Streamlining conveyancing to reduce duplication of checks, such as anti-money laundering.
- Enacting legislation in the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 to speed up the provision of information for leaseholders by freeholders, and protect leaseholders from unreasonable fees when requesting necessary information.

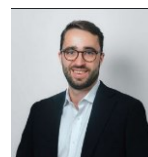
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