

# Diary of a Suffolk farmer

1st February

When I started work on the farm at 6 o'clock this morning, it was bitterly cold. The frost had made the fields much firmer by the time I spread the slurry. This made my work much easier. As I laboured, I noticed some white and lilac crocuses already flowering around the farm.

After preparing the fields, I fed my sheep some hay and sugar beet. During lambing, I will need to give my ewes more nutrients, feeding them nuts or pellets and less hay. They looked in good condition today but I will need to keep a close eye on them.

Once I had finished feeding the livestock, I set about some general maintenance around the farm. I had noticed there were a few old planks coming loose on one of the barn walls so I repaired those first.

12th March

Spring has almost arrived. Daphne and forsythia have started to bloom around the farm. Despite forty long years in farming, I never tire of seeing the change in the seasons. Although spring is the busiest time of year, it is my favourite season.

Lambing time is still ongoing so I have ewes and lambs that need constant attention. The sleepless nights are taking their toll.

I have been sorting the ewes into lambing groups, based on the number of lambs expected. They have now been vaccinated and their feet have also been trimmed to guard against foot rot. I am also feeding them lots of nutrients in these final weeks. We are prepared to welcome the new arrivals.

In addition to the excitement of lambing, I will need to continue to spread slurry throughout March and the sowing of sugar beet will happen this month as well. Fertilising and crop spraying are other important jobs. A farmer's work is never done in the spring. At least I will never be bored.

28th April

Lambing season has come to an end without too many challenges. Two foxes almost got into the barn last night. Though I managed to chase them away, my heart was racing. If they had snatched one of the newborn lambs, it would have been devastating.

My body has probably never ached as much as it has this month but it has all been worth it. Despite the overwhelming amount of work for one person, spring is brightening up the farm. The cherry trees in blossom, surrounded by primroses, are a truly glorious sight.

