

FOR A WORKING FARM

AI for Farmers

Where a computer genuinely helps on a working farm — the records, the paperwork, the planning, the messages you never get round to sending — and the honest places it must never be trusted. Real worked examples throughout, including the one a chatbot will get confidently wrong.

For the working farm

● Shipped – measured, gate-clean

COVER: A REAL WELSH HILL FARM, SHEEP AT PASTURE BELOW THE FARM BUILDINGS – REAL PHOTOGRAPH, NEVILLE GOODMAN (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 2.0).

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16 Image credits & attributions

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Every claim carries its tier · nothing faked

PREPARED

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VERIFIED BY

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15 years building safety-critical AI

HOW TO READ IT

Drafted with AI, verified by a
named human. Sources at the back.

01 The honest size of it



What AI is for a farm — and, just as plainly, what it is not.

Nobody writes AI guides for farmers, so most of what you hear is either city-office hype or vague doom. This one is written for a working farm — the records, the paperwork, the weather, the planning, and the honest question of where a computer helps and where it must not be trusted. No jargon. No selling. Just what is real, and where you can see it work.

Every rule in this guide gets shown at least once, not just stated. Where we say "verify against the source," a chapter later walks you through exactly what that looks like — including the one place a chatbot will give you a confident, wrong answer that could cost a farm real money and a real animal's welfare.

THE PLAIN TRUTH First, before anything else

AI is not going to run your farm, read your fields, or replace your stockmanship. What it can do is take a real bite out of the desk work — the letters, the record notes, the "what does this rule mean" — so you spend less of the evening on paperwork and more of the day on the job.

That is the honest size of it. Everything in this guide sits inside that limit.

For most farms, "AI" in practice means an assistant you talk to in plain language — you type or dictate a request, it writes back. Tools like ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini can draft, summarise, explain and organise text. You already carry the device that runs them: a phone.

This is separate from the sensor-and-satellite kit — yield mapping, precision spraying, collar tags — which is real but is bought as machinery, not typed into a chat. This guide is about the everyday assistant, because that is the part any farm can start using this week for nothing.

The whole guide, at a glance

Our AI Reliability Traffic Light, applied to the jobs a farm actually has. Green means go; amber means useful but check it; red means keep it well away.

Drafting records, letters and adverts from your notes A big time-saver on desk work — you stay the checker.	 as of July 2026
Explaining a scheme or rule in plain English Good for a first read — confirm against gov.uk / RPA before you act.	 as of July 2026
The weather forecast that drives spraying or cutting Use a live forecasting service — a chatbot's general knowledge is stale.	 as of July 2026
Withdrawal periods, doses and diagnosing a sick animal Stockmanship, the datasheet and your vet — never a chatbot. See Chapter 6.	 as of July 2026

02 Where it genuinely helps



Six jobs on a farm where the assistant earns its keep this week.

Crop and field records. Dictate a rough note after a job and ask it to tidy it into a clean, dated record entry. You still keep the official spray and field records properly; this just makes the writing-up faster.

Herd and flock notes. Turn scribbled observations into readable records — treatments given, calvings, lameness scores, movements. Always double-check numbers, ear-tag IDs and medicine details yourself.

The paperwork mountain. Draft letters, emails and forms — to the vet, the merchant, the landlord, the contractor. Explain a confusing scheme letter in

plain English and list what it is actually asking you to do, and by when.

Understanding the rules. Paste in a chunk of guidance and ask, "What does this mean for a farm like mine?" Then verify the answer against the official source before you act.

Planning and sums. Rough rotations, feed budgets, stocking plans, a first cut at a cash-flow. Treat every figure as a draft to check, not a decision.

Selling and hiring. Write a livestock or machinery advert, a farm-shop post, or a job ad for seasonal help — in a couple of minutes.



Real desk work waiting to happen: a field that needs its rotation drafted, its spray window planned, its paperwork written up.

Source: Photo: Tractor ploughing field – abhiriksh, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0



Records

notes → clean, dated entries



Paperwork

letters, forms, scheme replies



Planning

rotations, feed, a first cash-flow



Selling & hiring

adverts and job ads in minutes

Six jobs where the assistant earns its keep — all of them desk work, none of them stockmanship.

What the assistant does

- Tidies dictated notes into records
- Drafts letters, emails and adverts
- Explains a scheme letter in plain words
- Sketches a rough plan or budget

vs

What stays yours

- Every dose, date and withdrawal period
- Compliance and scheme claims
- Animal-health and safety judgement
- The final figure on anything that matters

The whole method in one picture: the assistant does the writing-up; you keep everything that carries weight.



For a working farm, AI is a fast farm secretary — not a farm manager.

The one line to remember

03 Worked example: a note becomes a spray record

From a muddy voice note at the field gate to a clean, dated spray record.

This is the single safest place to start, because there is no downside if the wording is rough. You dictate; it tidies; you check the numbers. Here is exactly how it goes.



The four steps of a safe first use — the gate is your check, and it is never skipped.



The field this record is for — real work, not a spreadsheet: a tractor and sprayer crossing open ground.

Source: Photo: Tractor and sprayer working near Congham — Richard Humphrey, geograph.org.uk, CC BY-SA 2.0

WORKED EXAMPLE

Dictated note → clean spray record

Spoken into a phone at the gate, one thumb on the record app.

YOU DICTATE

sprayed top 40 acres today product X half rate wind light from the west did it about half seven this morning ground still a bit damp

YOU ASK

Turn this into a clean, dated spray record entry with fields for date, field, area, product, rate, wind and notes. Flag anything I should double-check.

AI DRAFT

Date: 30 June 2026, ~07:30 · **Field:** Top 40 · **Area:** 40 ac · **Product:** "Product X" · **Rate:** half rate · **Wind:** light, W · **Notes:** ground still slightly damp at application.
Flagged to check: confirm the exact product name and approved rate from the label; confirm buffer-zone / LERAP requirements for the watercourse on Top 40.

YOUR CHECK YOU

You confirm the product's full name and the label rate, tie the entry to your official spray record, and note the operator and any buffer zones. The assistant saved the typing; you kept the responsibility.

Two minutes, not fifteen — and the record reads cleanly at inspection. The figures and the compliance points are still yours to confirm.

~15 min

writing it up by hand



you still confirm the figures

~2 min

dictate, tidy, check

The time it actually saves on the write-up — with the responsibility unchanged.

04 Worked example: a livestock movement & medicine record

The other record that eats an evening — turned into two minutes at the kitchen table.

Livestock paperwork is less forgiving than a spray record, because a movement or a medicine entry carries legal weight the moment it's written — and because the numbers in it (ear tags, doses, withdrawal periods) are exactly the ones a chatbot is most likely to get confidently wrong if you let it supply them instead of you. Here is the safe way to use it: for the writing-up only, never for the facts.

WORKED
EXAMPLE

A scribbled note → a movement record and a medicine record

Moving forty ewes and treating one for lameness, on the same afternoon.

YOU DICTATE

moved the forty ewes from far meadow to the top field this afternoon three fifteen ish also treated ewe tag UK 1234 00021 for lameness gave the usual footrot injection per the vet's instructions

YOU ASK

Split this into two separate entries: a movement record (from field, to field, date, time, number of animals) and a medicine/treatment record (ear tag, condition, treatment, who administered it, withdrawal period to confirm). Flag anything I need to fill in myself.

AI DRAFT

Movement record: 30 June 2026, ~15:15 · From: Far Meadow · To: Top Field · Number: 40 ewes.

Medicine record: Ear tag UK 1234 00021 · Condition: lameness · Treatment: footrot injection, per vet instruction · Administered by: (your name) · **Withdrawal period: not stated — you must confirm from the product datasheet or your vet before this animal or its produce can be moved to slaughter or its milk used.**

YOUR CHECK  YOU

You fill in the product's actual name, batch and dose from the vet's own record, confirm the withdrawal period from the datasheet (never from memory or a guess), and — depending on your part of the UK — log the movement with the correct livestock movement service within the legal reporting window. The assistant split the note into the right shape; every fact in it is yours to supply and check.

A tidy pair of records in under three minutes — and notice what the assistant did right here: it did not invent a withdrawal period. A tool that guesses one instead of flagging it as missing is the one worth worrying about, which is exactly the danger the next chapter walks through in full.



Every entry in a medicine record starts with an ear tag you can actually read — the one detail AI must never be allowed to guess at.

Source: Photo: Ear tagging with a cattle crush — Loren Kerns, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

05 Worked example: the scheme letter



Turning a dense RPA / scheme letter into a plain to-do list — then verifying it.



The paperwork this chapter is about starts here, on a real farm — the desk that letters land on between milkings.

Source: Photo: Traditional Welsh stone barn – Philip Halling, geograph.org.uk, CC BY-SA 2.0

WORKED EXAMPLE

A scheme letter → a dated action list

A four-page letter lands. You need to know what it actually wants.

YOU PASTE

[the full text of the scheme / RPA letter, pasted in]

YOU ASK

In plain English: what is this letter asking me to do, what are the deadlines, and what do I need to have ready? List actions with dates. Do not guess – if a detail is not in the letter, say so.

AI DRAFT

A plain summary, then a dated action list, for example:

1. Confirm your land parcels are up to date on the Rural Payments service — by the stated deadline.
2. Submit the requested evidence for the option you claimed.
3. Keep records that show the option was carried out.

Not stated in the letter: the exact evidence format — check the scheme guidance or ring the helpline.

YOUR CHECK YOU

You confirm every deadline and requirement against the scheme's own guidance on gov.uk before acting. The eligibility and the claim are administered by the Rural Payments Agency — the letter's summary is a starting point, not the authority.

You walked in from the yard, understood the letter in two minutes, and **checked the facts against the source** before committing to anything.

The same method works for the letter you have to *write*, not just the one you have to read — a grant or agri-environment scheme application draft, a first response to an inspection notice, or a covering note to an agronomist. Give the assistant the scheme's own question, your farm's real facts, and ask for a plain first draft; you still supply every figure and sign the final version yourself.

WORKED
EXAMPLE

Drafting a scheme application answer, from your own notes

The Sustainable Farming Incentive form asks for a hedgerow management plan.

YOU GIVE IT YOUR
NOTES

hedgerows on the north and east boundaries about 800m total currently cut every year want to move to every 2-3 years for wildlife also leaving margins already got some flower strips in the bottom field

YOU ASK

Draft a short, plain-English answer for a hedgerow management plan section of a scheme application, using only the facts I've given you. Do not add anything about the scheme's payment rates or eligibility — I'll check those myself.

AI DRAFT

"Approximately 800m of hedgerow across the north and east boundaries will move from annual cutting to a 2–3 year cutting cycle to benefit wildlife. Existing flower margins in the bottom field will be maintained alongside this change."

YOUR CHECK **YOU**

You measure the actual hedgerow length rather than trusting the round number in your own note, confirm the cutting-cycle wording matches the scheme's exact option text, and check the current payment rate and eligibility yourself on gov.uk before you submit — the assistant drafted the sentence; the RPA's own rules decide whether it's accepted.

A clean paragraph in under a minute, built entirely from facts you supplied — which is exactly why it's safe: nothing in it came from anywhere but your own notes and your own check.

The rule under every example so far

AI drafts the desk work; you sign off everything that touches money, medicine, compliance or safety. If getting it wrong means a failed inspection, a sick animal or a rejected claim, a human checks it against the real source — every time.

06 The danger worked example: a confidently wrong withdrawal period

The single most dangerous misuse of AI on a farm — shown, not just warned about.

Every reviewer of the previous version of this guide made the same point: the warning about withdrawal periods and doses was stated correctly and never actually shown. Here it is shown — a real question, a plausible-sounding wrong answer, and exactly why that answer must never leave your phone unverified.



The milk this chapter is about — the reason a wrong withdrawal period is not a paperwork error but a food-safety one.

Source: Photo: Wanner's Farm milking parlour, cows waiting – Beyond My Ken, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0

WORKED
EXAMPLE**The question that must never be answered by a chatbot alone**

YOU ASK

"What's the milk withdrawal period for [antibiotic product] in dairy cows?"

WHAT A CHATBOT WILL
CONFIDENTLY SAY IF
YOU LET IT

"The typical milk withdrawal period for that class of antibiotic is around 3-4 days, though you should always check the specific product." — stated fluently, with a specific-sounding number, and no request for the actual product name or batch.

WHY THAT ANSWER IS
DANGEROUS, NOT JUST
IMPRECISE

Withdrawal periods vary by the exact product, the dose given, the route of administration and sometimes the individual animal — a general "typical" answer can be days short of the real figure for your actual product. A language model has no access to the datasheet for the specific medicine in your fridge, has never seen the batch, and will still answer with total confidence because that is what it is built to do: produce a fluent, plausible-sounding sentence, not necessarily a correct one.

WHAT ACTUALLY
HAPPENS IF YOU ACT
ON THE WRONG NUMBER

Milk from that cow enters the bulk tank before it's legally clear. If it's tested and fails, the whole tank — potentially the whole tanker, blending milk from several farms — can be rejected. That is days of lost income, a conversation with your dairy, and in a repeat case, a real risk to your contract. All of it traces back to one confidently wrong sentence that was never checked.

THE ANSWER YOU
ACTUALLY ACT ON

You read the withdrawal period off the product's own datasheet (the SPC — Summary of Product Characteristics — that came with it, or the NOAH Compendium entry for the exact product), and if there's any doubt about the dose or route your vet actually used, you ring your vet and ask. Two minutes, and the number is real.



This is the one place in the whole guide where "verify against the source" is not a nicety — it is the entire difference between a normal week and a rejected milk collection. Use AI to draft the record *after* you have the real number from the datasheet or the vet; never to supply the number itself.

KEEP A HUMAN HERE

The one sentence to remember

A confident answer and a correct answer read identically on a phone screen. For any dose, withdrawal period or animal-health decision, the datasheet and your vet are the only sources that count — a chatbot is never one of them.

07 Worked example: weather into a work plan



Using AI to plan around the forecast — never to be the forecast.

An assistant can help you *plan around* weather — draft a week's work order, or talk through "if it's dry Thursday, what should come first". But do not rely on a chatbot for the forecast itself. For the actual weather that drives spraying, cutting and turnout, use a live forecasting service that updates by the hour — then hand *that* forecast to the assistant to help sequence the week.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A five-day forecast → a sequenced work plan

You've pulled the real forecast; now you want the week sequenced sensibly.

YOU PASTE THE REAL FORECAST AND ASK

"Met Office says: Mon dry & breezy, Tue dry calm, Wed rain from midday, Thu-Fri dry. I need to spray the top 40, cut the silage field, and get the ewes wormed this week. Suggest a sensible order, given the forecast."

AI DRAFT

Monday looks breezy for spraying — better suited to a lower-drift-risk job like moving or worming the ewes. Tuesday's calm, dry window looks best for spraying the top 40. Wednesday's rain rules out cutting; if the silage field needs a dry run-up, Thursday or Friday looks safer for cutting once the ground's had a day to firm up after Wednesday's rain.

YOUR CHECK YOU

You confirm Tuesday's actual wind speed against the live forecast on the morning itself — not the five-day outlook — before spraying, and you make the final call on ground conditions for cutting by walking the field, not by trusting a forecast from three days before. The assistant sequenced the plan; the forecast and your eyes on the ground make the actual call.

A sensible shape for the week in under a minute — built entirely from a forecast you fetched yourself, and re-checked on the day it matters.

KEEP A HUMAN HERE

Live weather is not a chatbot's job

A general AI assistant answers from training data that can be months or years stale and has no live feed. For the forecast that drives field decisions, use the Met Office or another live service — every time, on the day, not the day before.

08 The message bank — farm chasers & letters you can send tonight

The messages every working farm means to send and rarely gets round to. Paste, personalise, send.

These are not descriptions of messages — they are the messages. Swap in the name, the date and the figure, and every one of these is ready to send from the yard tonight.

TEMPLATE — the farm message bank

Ten copy-paste messages. Fill the brackets, check the facts, send.

- ☐ "Hi [name], just checking on the delivery of [feed/fertiliser] we ordered for [date] — still on track? Getting a bit tight for the [job] we need it for."

Merchant chaser — send the day before it's due, not the day after.

- ☐ "Hi [name], following up on the settlement for the [number] [stock] sold at [mart] on [date] — could you confirm when payment will clear? Thanks."

Buyer/auction payment chaser.

- ☐ "Hi [name], could you give me a rough quote for [silage/hedge-cutting/muck spreading] on [X acres/fields], looking to book [month]?"

Contractor quote request — sent early enough to actually get a slot.

- ☐ "Hi [vet practice], could we book a visit for [reason] — [animal/group], [any urgency]? Happy with [days] if that works for you."

Vet visit request — state the reason so triage is quick.

- ☐ "Hi [landlord name], flagging that [repair — e.g. the gate on the top field / a leak in the barn roof] needs attention when convenient — not urgent, but wanted you aware."

Landlord repair notice — factual, no drama, dated.

- ☐ "Thank you for the letter regarding [scheme/reference number]. Please find below/attached the confirmation you requested — [detail]. Let me know if anything further is needed."

Reply to an RPA/scheme query — polite, specific, dated.

- ☐ "For sale: [stock/machinery], [key details — breed, age, condition, price]. Viewing welcome, based near [area]. Message or call [number]."

Livestock or machinery classified advert.

- ☐ "Seasonal help wanted, [task — lambing/harvest/etc.], [dates], [pay/accommodation if offered]. Experience with [specifics] preferred but not essential. Message [number]."

Casual/seasonal labour job ad.

- ☐ "Hi [haulier/abattoir], confirming collection of [number] [stock] on [date] from [location] — please confirm time and any paperwork needed on the day."

Haulage/abattoir collection confirmation.

- ☐ "Hi [neighbour name], noticed [stock/fence/boundary issue] — happy to have a chat and sort it whenever suits, no rush."

A neighbour note — kept deliberately calm; never let AI draft a dispute letter.

The one message this bank will not give you

A dispute — with a neighbour, a contractor who did a poor job, or a buyer who's short- paid you — is exactly the wrong place for a fast, fluent draft. Those messages need your own judgement about tone and what you're actually prepared to do next; a chatbot writes confidently regardless of whether confidence is the right note to strike. Draft the easy ones with AI. Write the hard ones yourself.

09 The prompt library — twelve for the farm



A real bank of prompts, each with the one line that keeps you safe: your check.

A good farm prompt has the same four parts every time: the job, your own facts, the format you want it in, and the check you'll do before it goes anywhere near an inspector, a scheme claim or an animal. Miss the last part and you're trusting the tool; keep it and you're just using a fast typist.

THE JOB

Tidy this scribbled note into a dated spray record
Be as specific as your scribbled note already is

YOUR FACTS

Field, product, rate, wind, date, time – all from you
Every figure comes from you — never let AI supply one

FORMAT

The exact fields your record book or inspector expects
Tell it the shape you want, once, and reuse the prompt

YOUR CHECK

Confirm every number against the label, the vet or gov.uk
The part that stays yours, always

The anatomy of a prompt that keeps you in charge.

#	PROMPT	YOUR CHECK
1	"Turn this dictated note into a clean, dated spray record with fields for date, field, area, product, rate, wind and notes: [note]."	Confirm product name, label rate and buffer zones.
2	"Split this note into a movement record and a medicine record, and flag anything I haven't given you: [note]."	Confirm ear tags, dose and withdrawal period from the datasheet.
3	"In plain English, what is this letter asking me to do, and by when? Don't guess if it isn't stated: [pasted letter]."	Verify every deadline and requirement on gov.uk / RPA.
4	"Draft a short reply to this scheme query using only these facts: [your facts]."	Check the wording matches the scheme's exact option text before sending.
5	"Draft a polite chaser to a merchant about a delayed delivery of [item], due [date]."	Confirm the order number and date are correct.
6	"Sketch a rough gross margin for [enterprise] using these figures: [yield, price, costs]."	Check every input figure against your own costings before you act on it.
7	"Sequence this week's jobs — [list] — given this forecast: [paste the real forecast]."	Re-check the forecast on the morning of the job, not the day it was pulled.
8	"Write a livestock-for-sale advert from these details: [breed, age, price, location]."	Check nothing in the advert overstates health status or provenance.
9	"Summarise this guidance document and flag anything about deadlines or evidence I'd need: [pasted text]."	Verify anything you'll rely on against the original document.
10	"Draft a seasonal job ad for [task], dates [X], based near [area]."	Confirm pay and any accommodation details are accurate before posting.
11	"Tidy this week's scribbled expenses into categories: feed, vet, fuel, repairs, other: [notes]."	Check every figure against the actual receipt before it reaches your accounts.
12	"Explain what this scheme rule means for a farm with [your situation] in plain English."	Confirm the answer against the official scheme guidance — never act on the summary alone.

Twelve prompts for the farm — copy the wording, swap the brackets.

Every prompt ends the same way, whether it's written out or not: you check the facts before they leave your phone.

10 Your records, kept right



What a tidy, inspection-ready record set looks like — and where AI fits.

The assistant is good at turning your words into rows. It is not the system of record — your farm software, your red book and the official registers are. Use AI to write the rows up neatly; keep the master record where it has always lived. A worked set looks like this.



The flock these records belong to — a real sheep pen, not an illustration of one.

Source: Photo: Sheep pen at High Moor Head Farm — Oliver Dixon, [geograph.org.uk](https://www.geograph.org.uk), CC BY-SA 2.0

DATE	EAR TAG	EVENT	PRODUCT / DOSE	WITHDRAWAL	CHECK
12 Jun	UK 1234 00021	Lameness, foot trim	Topical spray	0 days	Vet if no better in 5d
18 Jun	UK 1234 00104	Calving, live heifer	—	—	Registered within 27d
24 Jun	UK 1234 00087	Antibiotic, per vet	Per label	7 days milk	Diary the date
28 Jun	Group: far meadow	Moved 40 ewes	—	—	Movement recorded

Herd & treatment log — the shape AI can draft from your dictated notes.

KEEP A HUMAN HERE

The medicine and movement records are yours

Withdrawal periods, medicine records and movement records carry legal weight and food-safety consequences. Let AI format the notes, but confirm every dose, date and withdrawal period against the product label and your vet's instruction. A confident wrong number here is a real problem, not a typo — see Chapter 6 for exactly what that looks like.

DATE	FIELD	AREA (AC)	PRODUCT	RATE	WIND	OPERATOR
30 Jun	Top 40	40	(label name)	Half	Light W	Initials
01 Jul	Ten-acre	10	(label name)	Full	Calm	Initials
03 Jul	River ground	22	(label name)	Half	Light S	Initials

Spray / application log — same idea, arable side.

Buffer zones / LERAP and the approved rate come from the product label — AI must not invent them.

11 Planning the year & the sums



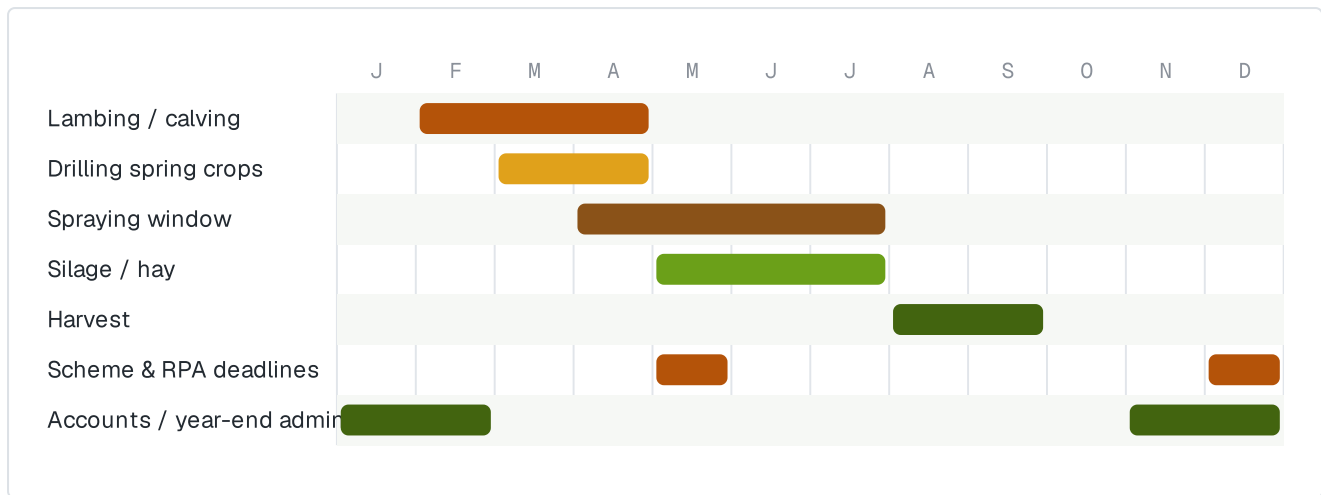
A season calendar, a first-cut margin per acre, and the formula behind it.

Al is a useful sketchpad for the year: it will lay out a rough calendar and a first cut at the numbers in seconds. Every figure is a draft to check against your own costings — but starting from a draft beats starting from a blank page.



The harvest this whole chapter's sums are ultimately about — the yield times the price, minus the costs.

Source: Photo: Combine in wheat field – Dan Kollmann, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0



A first-cut season plan — the assistant drafts it; you correct it to your ground.

Source: Illustrative planning sketch — confirm timings for your farm and season



First-cut gross margin per acre by enterprise — a draft to check, not a decision.

Source: Illustrative figures — replace with your own costings

$$\text{GM per acre} = \frac{(Y \times p) + s - (c_{\text{seed}} + c_{\text{fert}} + c_{\text{spray}})}{A}$$

where Y = yield (t), p = price (£/t), s = area support attributable, the c terms = the variable costs, and A = area (acres). Fixed costs (rent, machinery, labour) sit below the gross margin line.

This is the sum the assistant can lay out for you in seconds — with your numbers in, and your eye on whether they are right.

Enterprise gross margin per acre

12 Your season with AI

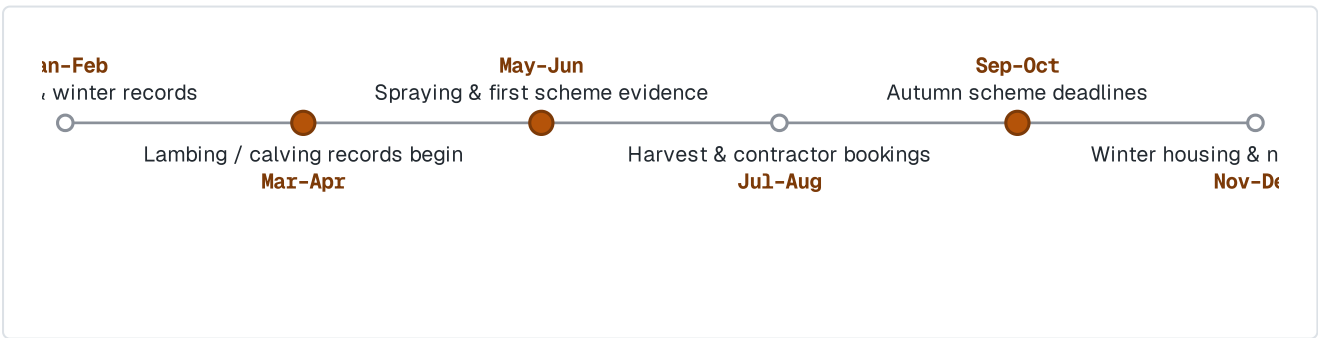


A month-by-month walkthrough of where the assistant actually earns its slot.

The season calendar in the last chapter shows the shape of the year. This is the same year, narrated — the specific desk-work moment each month brings, and exactly what you could hand to AI when it lands, so this guide isn't just a principle but a plan you can actually follow from January through to December.

WHEN	WHAT LANDS ON THE DESK	WHERE AI HELPS
Jan–Feb	Year-end accounts prep, movement records to reconcile, winter housing checks	Tidy a year's scribbled expense notes into categories for your accountant
Mar–Apr	Lambing / calving records, spring drilling, BPS-successor scheme window opens	Turn lambing-shed notes into clean birth records; draft a first read of the new scheme letter
May–Jun	Spraying window, first RPA/scheme evidence deadlines, silage first cut	Sequence the week around a real forecast; tidy spray records as you go (Chapter 3)
Jul–Aug	Harvest, mid-year cash-flow check, contractor bookings for autumn work	Draft the contractor quote request; sketch a mid-year gross margin update
Sep–Oct	Autumn scheme deadlines, the dense RPA letters, tupping/breeding records begin	The scheme-letter walkthrough (Chapter 4) does its heaviest lifting all year here
Nov–Dec	Winter housing, year-end paperwork, forward planning for next year's rotation	Draft next year's rough rotation and budget from this year's actual figures

Your season with AI — the desk work, month by month.



The same year, as a countdown of the moments the desk work actually spikes.

You don't need to start in January

Pick up this guide wherever you are in the year and start with whichever chapter matches what's actually on your desk this week. The point of a season walkthrough isn't a schedule to follow from the top — it's reassurance that whatever paperwork just landed, there's a worked example above for exactly that job.

13 Where a human must stay



The hard lines: live weather, animal health, compliance claims and your data.



The gate you don't open without checking first — the whole chapter, in one image.

Source: Photo: Farm gate onto sheep pasture – Mat Fascione, [geograph.org.uk](https://www.geograph.org.uk), CC BY-SA 2.0

Where a human must stay

These are red for a reason. AI can prepare the question; it cannot make the call.

Acting on a figure, dose, deadline or rule it gave you, unverified It can be confidently wrong. Check the label, the vet, or gov.uk first.	 Stop as of July 2026
Grant, subsidy and compliance claims The responsibility is yours; the check is against the official system (RPA).	 Stop as of July 2026
Judging animal health, dosing or whether a job is safe Stockmanship, the datasheet and your vet — never a chatbot. See Chapter 6.	 Stop as of July 2026
Pasting in bank details or others' personal data It leaves the yard, to the tool's company. Check the terms and your duties.	 Stop as of July 2026

Anything you type goes to the tool's company. Do not paste in bank details, someone else's personal information, or anything commercially sensitive you would not hand to an outsider. If you handle personal data — staff, contractors, customers — you have data-protection duties; check what a tool does with information before you put it in.

	DRAFT RECORDS & LETTERS	HANDLE BANK/PERSONAL DATA	GIVE YOU A DOSE OR DEADLINE
General AI assistant (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini)	●	○	○
Your vet / the product datasheet	○	●	●
gov.uk / RPA / the scheme's own guidance	○	●	●

● Go ● Check it ○ Keep a human

Match the tool to the sensitivity of the job — not the brand.

14 A safe first task, this week



Ten minutes, no downside — the way to get the feel of it.

Pick something with no downside if it is rough. Next time you finish a job, speak a rough note into your phone and ask the assistant to turn it into a clean, dated record — then read what it gives back.

Your first fortnight with an AI assistant

Tick these off over two weeks. Nothing here puts the farm at risk.

- ☐ Install one assistant app on your phone (ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini).
- ☐ Dictate one field or stock note and ask it to tidy it into a dated record.
Check the numbers and IDs yourself before you keep it.
- ☐ Paste one confusing letter and ask for a plain to-do list with deadlines.
- ☐ Verify every deadline and figure against gov.uk / the scheme guidance.
This step is the whole discipline — never skip it.
- ☐ Draft one advert, one job ad, or one supplier chaser from the message bank.
- ☐ Try one prompt from the prompt library on your own notes.
Notice which check you did before you trusted the result.
- ☐ Write down where it saved you time — and where you would never let it near.

Put a field and a red record-book on the front, and I will pin it in the barn.

Tomas, farmer — on what a made-for-me document feels like

15 TEMPLATE: what I'll use it for / never for



A one-page fill-in you can pin in the office — the whole guide, on a postcard.

Everything above boils down to one page. Fill this in for your own farm, pin it where whoever does the paperwork will see it, and the whole discipline of this guide travels with the page — not just with whoever read the book.

TEMPLATE — "On this farm, AI..."

Fill in the blanks. Keep it short enough to actually pin up.

- ☐ On this farm, AI drafts: _____ (e.g. spray & movement records, letters, adverts, job ads).
- ☐ On this farm, AI never touches: _____ (e.g. doses, withdrawal periods, scheme claims, the weather forecast).
- ☐ The person who checks every AI-drafted record before it's kept is: _____.
- ☐ The datasheet / vet contact we use for any dose or withdrawal question is: _____.
- ☐ Anything typed into an AI tool never includes: bank details, others' personal data, or anything we wouldn't hand to a stranger.

Do that for a fortnight on your notes and letters, and you will have a real feel for where it saves you time — and where you would never let it near. That is the whole method: use it for the desk work, check everything that matters against the real thing, and it earns its place without ever putting the farm at risk.

16 Image credits & attributions



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Worked example: the spray record	A tractor and crop sprayer working a field	Richard Humphrey — geograph.org.uk	CC BY-SA 2.0
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Where a human must stay	A farm gate onto a sheep pasture	Mat Fascione — geograph.org.uk	CC BY-SA 2.0

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17 Sources, glossary & the ledger

Where every claim comes from — and what the plain words mean.

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Plain-English glossary

AI assistant	A tool you talk to in plain language (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) that drafts, summarises and explains text. It is not connected to your farm systems.
Gross margin	An enterprise's output value minus its variable costs (seed, fertiliser, spray, feed). It excludes fixed costs like rent and machinery.
LERAP	Local Environmental Risk Assessment for Pesticides — the buffer-zone rules near watercourses. Comes from the product label and official guidance, never from a chatbot.
RPA	The Rural Payments Agency — administers farm payments and schemes in England. The authority on eligibility and claims.
Withdrawal period	The time that must pass after a medicine before milk or meat can enter the food chain. A legal, food-safety figure — confirm from the datasheet and your vet, never a chatbot's estimate.
SPC / datasheet	The Summary of Product Characteristics — the authoritative document for a veterinary medicine, including its correct dose and withdrawal period. Available via the NOAH Compendium or the product's own packaging.
Bulk tank	The on-farm tank where milk from all cows is collected before collection. A single animal's milk entering the tank before its withdrawal period ends can put the whole tank — or a whole tanker load — at risk of rejection.
SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive)	The environmental land management scheme succeeding the Basic Payment Scheme in England — one of several schemes whose letters and deadlines this guide's scheme-letter method applies to.
Livestock movement record	The legally required record of animals moving between locations, reported to the relevant national movement service within a set time window. AI may format the entry; the report and its timing are yours.

THE HONESTY LEDGER

● Shipped — measured, gate-clean.

🔬 Research — measured, partial; the gap is shown.

🔭 Vision — designed, honest; not yet built.

The bigger claim goes up a tier, never down. We show the eval beside the demo — the tiering is the credibility.

Get a free, tailored plan

Every farm is different. Take the free five-minute readiness check and get three concrete, honest next steps for your operation — no sales pitch.

</diagnose/quiz>

Nothing faked.

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