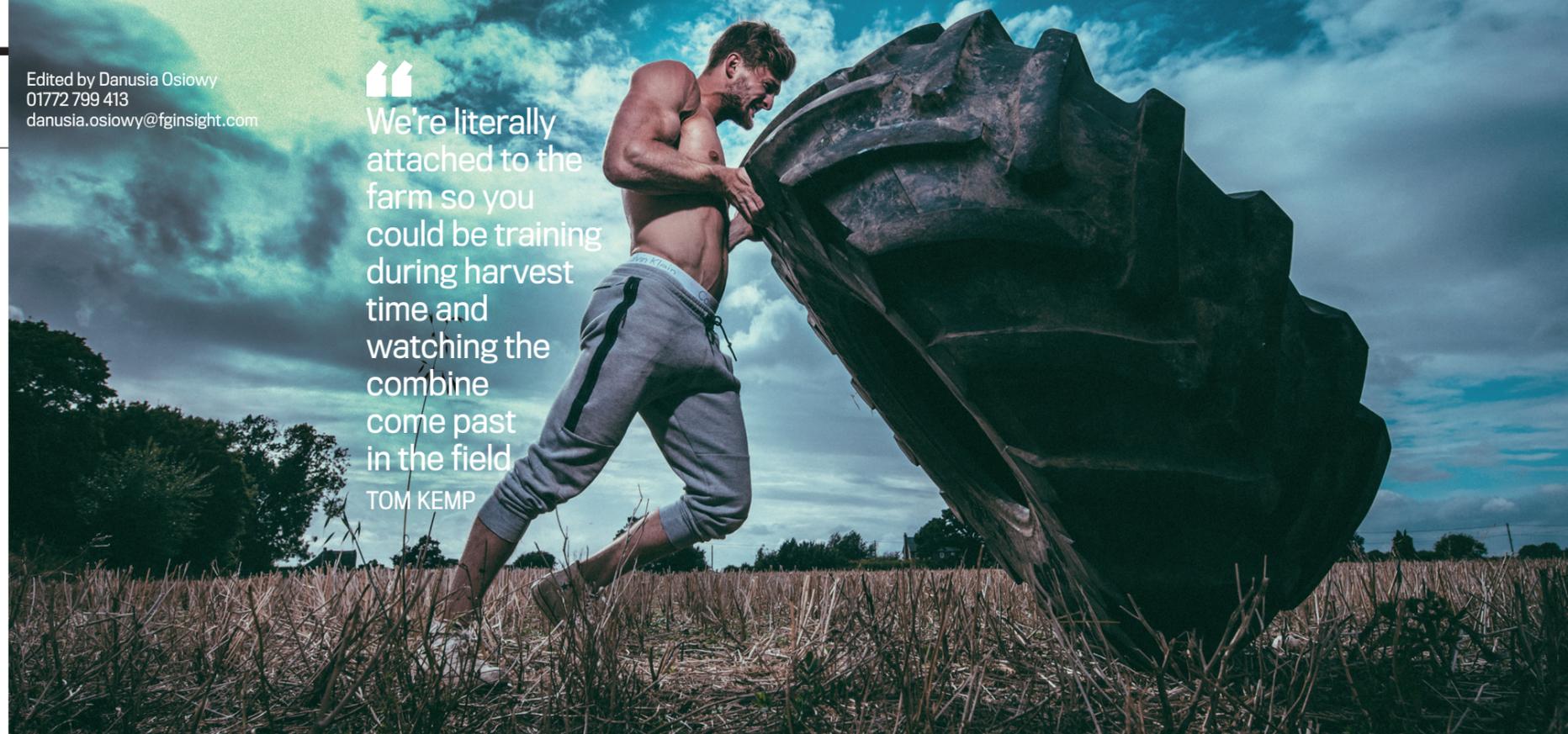


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Tom Kemp's outdoor gym features custom-built equipment right next to the home farm's fields. Photography: Chris Parkes



“We’re literally attached to the farm so you could be training during harvest time and watching the combine come past in the field.”  
TOM KEMP

There is a growing number of farmers who are embracing the health and fitness lasting way beyond resolutions for the New Year. **Emily Ashworth** and **Danusia**

industry, which is **Osiowy** report.

# Healthy profits in farm fitness

The post-Christmas bulge is synonymous with January for many people. Some embark on a dry month, while others vow to shed surplus pounds by throwing themselves at the treadmill.

While intentions are short-lived for some, others will succeed in their quest to improve their health and nutrition, and Essex farmer Tom Kemp and Welsh athlete Ash Dykes are among the entrepreneurs who are benefiting from the surge in people choosing to adopt healthier lifestyles.

With research by Mintel revealing sugar has overtaken fat as the number one health foe, more consumers are turning to a lower carbohydrate and higher protein diet and learning more about food provenance.

As a result, health-focused websites and businesses have boomed, with the likes of Hello Fresh, Muscle Food and Green Pasture Farms, to name a few, championing the nutritional quality of their produce and working with farmers to deliver powerful, salubrious messages.

Although gym memberships swell by about 12 per cent each January, most of these new members will quit or stop going after six months, says the Fitness Industry Association.

## Farm Fitness

- Farm Fitness has a core membership of about 80
- The farm offers three signature classes each week
- The business is hugely bolstered by hundreds of extra visitors who descend on the farm for regular, bespoke events
- Small group personal training sessions are also held

- The main equipment is a custom-made rig with exercise attachments surrounded by an all-weather training track, all overlooking the farm
- Strength equipment includes loadable farmer walk handles, wheelbarrows and sandbags, plus farm gear including chains, tractor tyres, hay bales and lifting straps

However, this level of decline is certainly not seen at Farm Fitness.

While fitness and health is a growing industry, young farmer Tom Kemp has found a new and innovative way to train which brings farming and health to the fore.

Combining his passion for training and his agricultural upbringing, Tom has created a fitness empire outdoors at his home farm.

## Active

Growing up on the 243-hectare (600-acre) family arable farm in Essex meant Tom spent his childhood in the countryside and was always active in some way.

Enjoying the natural physicality of farm work, he was inspired to set the business up on land which was

used to store old farm machinery.

For Tom it isn't just about the positive impact exercise has, but also the surroundings in which you choose to train.

He says: “It’s about being in an outside environment. I’ve worked in underground gyms before where there was no natural light. That isn’t great for your mindset.”

With the support of his family, 25-year-old Tom built his fitness business to integrate and support the farm.

“We’re literally attached to the farm so you could be training during harvest time and watching the combine come past in the field.

“I still help Dad when I can but he’s supportive of this and loves the idea of diversification.”

Although the gym caters for everyone, Tom does get a lot of interest from those with farming backgrounds. Many come from London too, seeking the healthy, natural environment of a working farm. And his country conditioning is translating in to success, with Farm Fitness recently being named one of best gyms in the world by *Men’s Health* magazine.

## Equipment

There is a raw, organic feel to what Tom does as much of the equipment is bespoke and custom made.

The body, says Tom, is made to manoeuvre in multiple ways and, rather than adhere to the regime of workouts in the everyday gym, he has taken inspiration from the physical life on-farm.

“It is a rig with various exercise attachments surrounded by an all weather track for functional training. I also use a range of strength equipment, such as loadable farmer walk handles, wheelbarrows, sandbags and raw farm equipment including hay bales, chains, tractor tyres and lifting straps.

“I really try to use equipment which allows a person to replicate functional, everyday movements.”

By creating such a positive link

between farming and fitness, Tom believes it will help people see the industry in a different light.

“I believe the positive use of redundant spaces is a great way to spread the ethos of an outdoor environment. It is important to encourage people to be proactive, get outside and away from the typical confined gym experience.

“Upcycling, reusing space and making use of farm consumables, such as the tyres which would otherwise be destined for landfill, also reinforces our ethos, taking care of the planet and our bodies can go hand in hand.

“It’s certainly changed my mindset and view of keeping fit. I would love other people to experience it too.”

The importance of good, quality food alongside training is also key to improving health and this is why extreme Welsh athlete Ash Dykes has teamed up with Rhug Estate’s Lord Newborough to highlight the impact of organic food and training and fitness.

The pair have teamed up to create the Ash Dykes Mission Possible Meat Box filled with additives-free lean and high protein foods, claiming it has 50 per cent more omega 3 and vitamins than other conventional meats.

“From a young age, I’ve taken my nutrition seriously so it is fantastic to have an organic food box named after me.”  
ASH DYKES

## Ash Dykes Mission Possible Meat Box

- The Ash Dykes Mission Possible Meat Box is an organic lean and high protein meat box promoting good health and nutrition
- The box costs £62.98 and includes two 175g chicken breasts; four 150g Aberdeen-Angus beef minute steaks; two 180g pork leg steaks; two 200g

- lamb leg steaks; two 200g venison steaks and one 500g diced venison
- The farm shop stocks more than 2,000 products with a real focus on Welsh, local and organic
- Its award-winning organic meat is served in Michelin starred restaurants around the world

Ash says: “I like everything Rhug Estate does and how it stands for sustainability and organic farming. It’s something I’ve always been interested in.”

## Nutrition

At the age of 23, Ash became the first person to walk across Mongolia solo and unsupported, a journey which took 78 days.

“From a young age, I’ve taken

my nutrition seriously so it is fantastic to have an organic food box named after me,” he says.

“My body has been pushed to its absolute limit on my expeditions. It’s so important that I’m in 100 per cent peak condition, mentally and physically, so sustaining my body on good, quality, organic foods is key.”

Lord Newborough, who took up an opportunity in Sierra Leone for

fishery protection, surviving three coups while working there, is also no stranger to fitness and shares the same nutritional values as Ash.

The estate, which attracts high-profile chefs such as Marcus Wareing, boasts a 2,700ha (6,700 acre) organic farm rearing organic beef, lamb, chicken, turkey and goose.

It is one of the largest organic farm shops in the UK and focuses on Welsh, local and organic produce.