

Newsletter Dec 2015

This newsletter, begun in April 2015, was suddenly deflected by my unexpected and very unnerving admission to hospital, essentially for the ensuing six months. This left our new HAWL one day a week secretary, Margaret Richardson, with the Herculean task of keeping things going. With little farming or teaching experience and without contacts and precedents to draw on, Margaret is coping magnificently and has just finished the autumn course, the **fortieth** HAWL course, the first without me. I hear it went well with enthusiastic students, so huge thanks are due to Margaret and her enthusiasm. I am also very grateful to Lawrence Woodward, formerly Director of the Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm) for his support and guidance to both me and Margaret.

July 2014 to Dec 2015

Activities in this time have been

Basic Courses. We held three courses at Tetbury and one on Holt Farms in Blagdon, below Bristol, the latter with five members of Holt Farm staff and one farmer from North Devon who has been particularly good at keeping us up to date with his progress.

For the courses we now use very smart files and clipboards, green on white, advertising HAWL and the suppliers Helios, Ainsworths and Crossgates who support HAWL farmers.

Extra teaching days (“Day 4”) We held two. One in Tetbury and one in SW Wales, this latter for the OMSCo antibiotic free group who arranged the day and enlisted funding from Dairy Co. For HAWL to run courses “away from home” is really not feasible, we do not have the admin capacity or the funds to support them, but very gently the industry is beginning to recognise us so you may find your local Dairy Co. (MDC as was) receptive to helping with funding, find a teaching room etc. As a guide, teaching days away from Tetbury costs between £1500 and £2000 to run, depending on the distances teachers have to travel.

On Farm Support Groups (OFSG)

These less formal meetings are held around the country, usually three for each group per year, in Wales, Exmoor, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Suffolk. These offer a chance for HAWL farmers to exchange information and discuss cases, and be whipped back into line by a HAWL teacher when they relax into un-homoeopathic thoughts. It is so easy to “disease chase” rather than look at the totality of symptoms, to look only at the udder or the back end without looking for events which might have been a trigger and how the animal is showing this dis-ease. OFSG meetings can be in any area. If you would like to

host one contact Margaret (secretary@hawl.co.uk). HAWL supplies the teacher and farmers bring their own refreshments. Sessions cost £25 per head Friends and vets are welcome, if they pay, but as they have not taken the course can only sit quiet and listen.

We at HAWL retain a great interest in all our former students so please let us know how you are getting on, it gives us pleasure and adds to the knowledge of other HAWL farmers. In addition, every anecdote adds to the sum total of “anecdotes and the more anecdotes we get the more powerful the argument. A study on “big data” pointed out that while correlation does not indicate cause it does tell us what is going on. This in itself cannot be ignored, although what is then done with the information will not always be obvious. The article I read gave an example. Number crunching had shown that orange cars breakdown least. Does that mean painting your car orange will prevent breakdown? Obviously not, but the facts remain and are borne out by my sister whose orange Allegro, after being covered by six feet of snow for 8 weeks (in Aberdeen) started first time.

So please keep the stories coming in, whether simple pictures such as the effect of Aconite before TB testing or in tail ringing, or complex ones such as reductions in vet and med costs. The results are there and the more stories we collect the bigger the data. The attitude of the veterinary profession will eventually have to change! One former student who went on to train as a homoeopath made a study of five sheep farmers converting to organic production and using remedies. Every one of them complained about the attitude of their vets who ascribed recovery after an antibiotic to their prescription but after a remedy to coincidence. At the moment the cry is “we need more and better antibiotics”, but Henry Ford pointed out that, before the advent of the motor car, if asked what would help them get around better people would have said “faster horses”. We know that what is really needed is more homoeopathy. Please help us to collect that data.

Vet poll on homoeopathy

A poll within the veterinary profession suggested the use of homoeopathy by vets be banned. Afterwards the following letter was sent to all vets:-

Despite our poll (and website) being aimed purely at the veterinary profession, the upshot of social sharing is that everybody wants to have a say on certain contentious subjects – a factor some pro-homeopathy individuals and organisations took advantage of by rather vigorously prompting their friends and followers to take part.

As such, responses to the question "Should the RCVS blacklist homeopathy from the treatments veterinary surgeons are allowed to offer animals and their owners?" were:

No (66%, 1,760 Votes)

Yes (34%, 915 Votes)

Don't know (0%, 11 Votes)

While respectful of everyone's right to have their say, this deluge of mostly non-veterinary responses rather skewed the results and we can no longer say they are representative of our readership. In fact, the yes/no percentages are completely flipped from where they stood before the poll was hijacked.

It doesn't help anyone's cause much when those sharing the poll claim vets "don't like [homeopathy] because they know nothing about it" and suggest the reason vets might vote to see it blacklisted is because "it is likely taking business away from them".

As the ones who pay the piper do let HAWL know your reaction to this or tell the RCVS

There is much emphasis, in alternative cancer websites, on the effectiveness of eating what they refer to as "real food" (not processed) included information about the various herbs and spices which research is finding are effective in reducing tumours. With Curcumin (Turmeric) it was important to be organic, the theory being that organic plants have to rely on producing their own protection. Other news from the "Western Front", USA, home of agro chemicals and pharmaceutical domination includes the fact that glyphosate has been classed as a potential carcinogen.

Tackling isolation and building confidence

One bit of feedback we do get is how isolating it can feel, being back on the farm with no further homeopathic support. It's a big responsibility, and can be very daunting, treating sick animals yourself, especially if you have a skeptical vet. I think this email speaks for many of you:-

One thing I wanted to suggest as a really valuable 'tool' for keeping the experience, the ideas and the networking going around and accessible for all HAWL 'graduates' would be to set up an **online HAWL forum**. I'm currently getting a lot of advice from this smallholding forum: <http://www.accidentalsmallholder.net/forum/>. It really is worth a look - a great example of a well-run forum - a real goldmine of information and friendly advice from people with lots of experience, with a lot of people involved to keep the conversation going at all times and a real community growing out and around it. I couldn't do without it now, though it's totally useless for any advice on alternative methods (I've been shot a few times for even implying that I'm not in favour of vaccinating or using chemical flystrike prevention...) - so I'm desperate for HAWL to fill that gap! And another example, from the US: <http://www.holisticcat.com/forum/>.

The advantage of a forum is that all contributions are accessible to everyone else, backwards and forwards,

and once it is properly up and running this can all build up into a really valuable body of searchable information for everyone (while group meetings or working with a mentor just benefits the few people involved directly). Last but not least, the forum could provide a 'body' of information that can be accessed by people searching the net for this kind of information, therefore potentially recruiting more HAWL students and generally spreading the word.

In order for a forum to get going and to build up momentum I think you really need to get an initial period of frequent postings/conversations going, possibly 'recruiting' a few people to post problems and some with more experience (homeopaths? mentors?) to post some useful replies and keep the conversation going. (All the posts can only ever be advice or 'this is what I would do' type suggestions, not actual prescribing, so I can't see there would be a problem with the law - a disclaimer could be added.) As with most projects you need someone to put an active drive behind it, be the 'heart of it, at least until it takes up a life of its own. I'd be very happy to be involved and help get this off the ground if you think this is a good idea, though other people.

We have often been asked about this, again something HAWL is not able to administer. Several HAWL farmers have tried to start one, this email came last year. Anyone interested? If so email Margaret and she will forward it to Katerina.

Another farmer wrote:- Attending the HAWL course last year has definitely helped me understand a lot more about using homeopathy (in animals as well as in humans - my partner has been my most successful guinea pig so far) so I'm really glad I did it, but as other people seem to mention according to the newsletter, I find it a real struggle to keep my confidence up. I do find that the 'real life' cases I have been faced with offer far less symptoms to go on than the test cases in the course, or maybe it is that I have to sharpen my observation skills a lot more, in short I think that access to more (and ongoing) support would be really helpful!

It's not only confidence in my skills at taking a case and choosing the right remedy, there is also the prevailing attitude 'in the air' (e.g. when talking to other smallholders or farmers) that implies that not using conventional methods (i.e. chemicals/antibiotics/wormers etc - in particular for routine, 'just in case' treatment) somehow equates with not taking good care of your animals. As I'm rather new to smallholding I often seek advice from more experienced people so I do run into this attitude very often which plunges me into a crisis of conscience more often than not.

Of course it is important not to try and run before you can walk, to attack the simple situations and not expect to be able to tackle every mastitis case successfully! Many farmers report that approaches as simple as treating the young stock and adults with Ignatia and Aconite improves general health status, production, weight gain etc. but farmers who have a homeopathic vet or have asked a homeopath to help are the ones who report most success and more confidence. It is also important to **try** using a remedy, as well as conventional treatment where you feel

happier. The more you use remedies the more you learn, including where you chose the wrong one.

To learn about each remedy Ed Shaeffer, a USA homoeopathic vet suggested his farmers keep a new remedy (perhaps Puls as it is so often needed with young stock) in their pocket for a few weeks and whenever they saw the typical symptoms (clingy, thirstless, wanting fresh air and with yellowy-green snotty noses) give a few doses and see if they were right.

Tackling parasites

We have quite a few queries about parasites and running a HAWL parasite day - With one's homoeopathic hat on, a parasite is simply a "bug", just another indication of "dis-ease" and a sign that the animal needs a remedy to improve its general health and raise the resistance. Good management plays a huge part, rotation, stocking density, good nutrition, appropriate breeds and breeding from resistant animals all play a part. Vermex did suggest HAWL would run a session on their herbal anthelmintic but I decided it was not really HAWL's role to promote commercial products. Additionally it is not cheap, dairy farmers report that it taints the milk, so much that calves refuse it. Would it taint eggs and meat? However, should enough of you request it, in Tetbury or really anywhere, the offer is still open.

Points to consider:

- 1) An ADAS study found that unwormed lambs on "optimum nutrition" had the highest foecal egg count, (many of which could not be identified) but gained the most weight. So certain parasites must be beneficial, and we really do not know much about them.
- 2) While we know that parasites, bacteria and nematodes are not all pathogens, science really knows very little about which are good and which bad. Certainly bacteria mutate according to the internal climate the "terroire", thus beneficial EColi mutate into pathogens (EColi 145 for example) in grain fed animals and reverse when the animals are fed grass. When we give anthelmintics what else do we destroy?
- 3) Parasites are an acute eruption of an underlying chronic problem. You may have to take specific action, going much on the picture of the parasite with not much else, and then afterwards a more total picture to find a more complete constitutional remedy to prevent this happening again.
- 4) Not all animals in a group get the parasites. Have a look at those which do and see if you can find a totality to indicate a remedy. Eg Staph, gets "invaded" physically emotionally and mentally, "insulted" (See Geoff's story of the animal being bullied (in your notes)). So Staph may help where animals are "invaded" by parasites, if their bigger picture fits. Worth a try. Similarly, Cina, a well known worm treatment for children has a barking cough and a study done at Aberdeen University showed

that a product including Teuc. had good results on worm burden in sheep. There are about a dozen remedies in the rubric "worms" in the bigger repertoires; you need to look up their pictures in the Materia Medica. The remedy you use may be the "constitutional" for that animal or you may find the picture changes later.

Thoughts on fly strike

Last year when there was some discussion about fly strike. Linnie Hutchison sent the following, saying she uses remedies which fit the picture if possible. As she puts it: *ie, this is the situation - these are the remedies that immediately come to mind and this one seems most appropriate or I'm not sure so I'll do both - not good for research I know but good when you need results and can't do a trial!!! Often it's which of the appropriate remedies do we have in the store, and let's give those while we order something more spot on; refreshing to know that we're not the only ones operating in this way. Sometimes when we do have time to look something up in lots of detail we find something that might have been better, but they have recovered anyway or sometimes reassuringly we've hit it spot on.*

The thing I'd like to know about fly strike is how far do the flies fly? I've looked at the freeze dried liver traps and can see that they would work in some fields to reduce the number of blow flies, where the lay of the land dictates you're more likely to get a problem, but I'm wary of enticing in flies from miles around and making the situation worse. I couldn't get an answer from the trap manufacturers, but can see that the traps would be easy to make: just corex double-sided sticky tape and bait; does anyone know an entomologist who might know?

We shear early to protect the sheep at the start of the season and when we do spray we usually get away with one application in the season. It does seem to be the same sheep that attract the flies. I've often toyed with the idea of changing their smell to see if it makes a difference, but never been able to do it. I have used tansy on a ewe with mastitis to keep the flies off her which worked. I guess if you culled out the ewes that got strike you may get rid of the attractants but it's a bit of a severe solution!

And the odd one that gets struck we've used hypercal wash or calendula but it's only small patches, not a severe secondary infection.

I'm still happy to host a walk and chat if we can sort a date.

Linnie farms in Dorset, came on one of our very early courses and with the help of Chris Aukland has used remedies more and more. Probably the most important time was to help her daughter through chemotherapy when the nurses commented on how much faster the little girl recovered. If any of you are interested in taking Linnie up on the suggestion of a farm walk, can you get in touch with Margaret? This type of information exchange is very valuable.

Homoeopathy in dairy farming.

Sally Woods from the HAWL/OMSCo anti-biotic free dairy farmers in SW Wales sent the following report:-

At a very interesting and productive meeting we discussed remedies given before birth and after birth.

Before Birth: In Pantglas we used the remedy *Caulophyllum* for 3 weeks before calving. We put it in daily for the first week, then every other day for the second week and then twice a week for the third week. We also give *Caulophyllum* at birth when needed to help with the calving.

At birth: We all used the following remedies when the cow was calving:

Caulophyllum – Eases the calving

Arnica – For the cow and calf if it has been a difficult/hard calving (If assistant is needed)

Aconite – Cow and calf. Can be a fearful experience, especially for heifers.

We also discussed the importance of **colostrum**. Should be given as soon as possible to the calf. Did discuss tubing calves, and we came to the conclusion that tubing is the last resort, as research shows that the tube can enter the wrong stomach and the colostrum is not absorbed efficiently. Getting the calf to suck the teat is a much better method to ensure the nutritional value of the colostrum is entered into the calf.

Separation. We all used the remedy *Ignatia* for the separation. The cow and calf receives this remedy to help both cope with the separation. In Pantglas, we do try *Nat.Mur* if the cow or calf is finding it difficult to deal with the separation. Arwel used *Aconite* as well to prevent any oncoming diseases.

First sign of illness. As a routine, in Pantglas we put *Cocci*, *Nux Vom* and *Calf Health* remedies in the milk for each feed to try and prevent any diseases from occurring.

We also use a combination of *China* and *Arsenicum* at the first sign of scour. This worked well with us this year and seemed to cure calves that had scour in a matter of a day or two.

Peter also put the *Cocci* remedy in the milk. He only used *Arsenicum* for calves that were suffering with scour, and also used *China* for a 'dodgy' looking calf!

Arwel had a specific case that he shared with us in the meeting that involved using a remedy called *Calc Carb*. The calf was drinking just enough to survive, and wasn't doing very well at all, in fact the calf was going backwards, and losing weight. Arwel put some of the *Calc Carb* remedy in the milk one night and the calf did drink a little more than usual. Arwel sprayed the calf with *Calc Carb* and by the next feed, that calf was rearing to go and very keen to drink. We decided that this remedy should be given to a 'Bad-dooer'. (Ed Note. *Clac Carb* is worth reading up. It is often seen as a good 'constitutional for the poor doer of the more stolid, slow aimiable kind).

Dehorning isn't a very nice experience for the calves, so in Pantglas we tend to put *Aconite* in the milk for a few feeds before the day of dehorning. We then combine *Arnica* and *Hypericum* in a spray bottle and spray them before and after the process for dehorning. All that were present at the meeting used these three remedies whilst dehorning their calves, and found the results very rewarding.

HAWL dairy farmer Chris Gosling took part in a SA "farm lab" looking at the reduction of antibiotics in the dairy herd, which she said was very useful in that all the members swapped notes about their own systems however she still uses homeopathy first. Chris is also hosted a field lab on the effect of using the Obsalim card system. "It is like learning a language to understand what the animals really want in their ration rather than what we think they should have. You don't have to change the ration dramatically, it is more of a fine tuning - a bit more / less cake or forage or straw to let the rumen work efficiently". Incidentally, at an Obsalim day recently the vet said that the short tight cough you hear so often in calves is always a nutritional problem. This does not mean a remedy would not help, earlier rather than later, but it might alert you to a feed problem too.

Thanks also to Chris for volunteered to man the HAWL stand, (which was offered to us free of charge and which I could not attend) at the annual conference of the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths. Here are her impressions of the event.

Manning the HAWL stand

Chris Gosling, organic dairy farmer. August 2015

In May I volunteered to exhibit for HAWL at the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths conference in London, and I am so glad that I did, it was a very interesting and enjoyable day. Once I had set up the display boards (not an easy task for a beginner) and put out all the flyers etc, I could relax and talk to the delegates about the HAWL course and how homeopathy can be used on the farm. We discussed the remedies that are regularly used for various illnesses and stressful situations and the similarities and differences between treating humans and animals. A lot of the homeopaths thought that treating animals would be difficult because they can't tell you their symptoms and how they feel. I explained the observational skills that most farmers have for finding symptoms and gave examples of cow behaviour at times of calving, bulling, or not bulling, mastitis, lameness, other illnesses, TB testing and at other stressful times and how this behaviour can be translated into remedy states. They were very interested in the concept of preventative homeopathy and how it could be incorporated into the farming year. Many took flyers away to read and some were interested in taking the course so that their practices could include their local farms. I surprised myself at how much I had to say about farm homeopathy and realised just how much I have learnt from the HAWL course and further training days, which also encouraged me to learn further from books and online courses. I am also lucky to have an excellent homeopathic vet who has taught me a lot as well. I started out feeling so afraid of not using conventional medicine, especially for mastitis cases. Now I very rarely use, or want to use, any conventional medicine, I feel much more confident and know that my cows are healthier without them, although I do have respect for them in life or death situations. I remember one of the HAWL tutors saying

that we may become obsessed with homeopathy and start buying remedies and books instead of shoes ... she was right !

I had support on the stand from Oliver Dowding , who was a dairy farmer in Somerset and successfully used homeopathy for his herd for many years . He gave an excellent presentation on farm homeopathy . He said that at a time when antibiotic resistance is becoming a major issue and an estimated 80% of our antibiotic exposure comes via the food chain , homeopathy clearly has a major role to play in healthy food production. He gave examples of successful cases on his own farm and training needed for the farm staff to be able to use it efficiently .

The other presentations were also very interesting. I could see from my stand at the side of the conference room that the delegates were spell bound and emotionally charged by the speakers , especially Delny Britton who gave a particularly disturbing presentation on the cruel testing of homeopathic remedies on animals .This is totally against what homeopathy stands for , as Hahnemann said " first do no harm " , and it is also totally unnecessary.

I enjoyed talking to the other exhibitors , Nelsons , who had the stand next to mine and generously gave me the full Bach's flower remedy kit ! Weleda remedies , aromatherapy oils and Narayani remedies . The latter sell combination remedies based on matching similarity of state .They believe that the best prescription is always unique and similar to the individual whether it presents as one remedy or several , a combination or a sequence .The remedies have been tried and tested very successfully in the busy clinics in India , Mauritius and South Africa by qualified doctors and experienced homeopaths and have been given to thousands of sick patients .

There was also a book shop and amongst the hundreds of books I found " Insights into Veterinary Homeopathy " by Peter Gregory , a homeopathic vet and past president of the British Association of Homeopathic veterinary surgeons .As well as a detailed explanation of the concepts of homeopathy , he also describes the most common remedy States encountered in practice with guidance on how to recognise them in an animal patient , including farm animals . He does this in an easy to understand and a very entertaining way . It is a fantastic book .

So it was a great day and thank you to Karin and ARH for making me feel so welcome .

Farmer experiences

The following are all emails from HAWL farmers. If you want to get in touch with any of them can you email Margaret quoting the email and she can send your details to the writer.

1. *I wish I could just write as much about spectacular successes with homeopathy on my animals... but I'm afraid it's just been a modest tool in the background. I've certainly used remedies but cases are either too routine to be spectacular, like pre-lambing, castration, small wounds (and*

I can't compare with previous years anyway), or too complex/chronic for me to be able to get it right to a spectacular effect.

My best story maybe a broody hen (in November, so no point in getting her fertilised eggs to sit on) persistently sitting for 40 days! An interesting case as I initially didn't think this could be classed as an illness as it is a natural process. But then she went on far beyond the normal 21 days so I tried a couple of remedies with no success, but then she did get up and back to normal 36 hours after a dose of Opium...I did actually contact Chris Auckland about this case and he was very helpful indeed, giving me a few ideas but never any answers.

2. *We are really on top of what we already know, and possibly a bit more about what we could do to prevent things. We use the New Zealand book for reference most days, some of the calves chase me round to have some remedy; it seems to really help such a lot of them.*

One thing we did have a week past Thursday, that we called the vet out for. All the cows were coughing and looked really ill, he said to treat them for lung worm, which we did. But we thought it was weird them all coughing the same day, even the heifers which should still have been covered by the cydectin; they had it May which should have been OK till October. Going by the advice on the course I should probably have used Belladonna, as they were really wide eyes, it had been very hot that day. The coughing has settled but they are still puffing a bit.

The calves are doing well, I treat them for crypto for 4 days at birth, give 1 dose of Tub Aviary as recommended in the New Zealand book; yes we still get scour but it causes no problems, we just treat each as it comes along, haven't had calf refuse to feed like we were getting since starting with the Tub Aviary.

We use remedies every day, and have been delighted with the result. One calf had colic last night, rolling round the pen kicking legs in the air etc. Treated with Carbo Veg and by the time I had given the others water, it was sitting right, chewing its cud. Best thing we have done for a long time was travel to Tetbury even though it was a long way. (Two farmers from N Cumbria)

3. *We've used some remedies with great success but mainly the "big 6". Hypericum and Aconite for dehorning, Aconite and Ignatia for our new "bought in" calves, Ignatia for taking calves from Mums. The Aconite is incredible when loading the new calves into our trailer when we collect them - we literally felt them stop panicking in our hands - incredible. We had a nasty bout of pneumonia last winter with very wet conditions and a shed that we couldn't adequately drain and while I initially tried to find the right remedy, we quickly involved the vet and antibiotics. Overall, for me, I think it's down to confidence and continual learning. I'm very impressed and would love to use homeopathy more but I don't always see the cows daily and have less to do with their handling so I feel that I sometimes miss "the picture" and am relying on my husband's observations.*

Overall, I think that the prevention remedies have helped enormously and I'm hoping that we can use it more and more. The course was brilliant.

4. Current successes: used Hypericum for disbudding young nannies and on the tail and castration of our micro sheep flock, Ignatia for weaning nannies, Aconite for shortening long horn growth/regrowth on adults (works really well as they keep calmer and so the others don't get stressed too), trying gallium on recommendation from Crossgates for the CLA which is in our herd (only started this and yet to see much change but it is a chronic issue), the Crossgates combined scours remedy is proving invaluable: We normally would use Vit B 12 injection to treat, which works in a couple of days and with some loss in milk production. With the Crossgates combination remedy we haven't noticed such a drop back in milk production and they are brighter and back together much sooner.

Feedback on the courses

The next type of emails is always a pleasure to receive, we send them on to all the teachers. It also helps give confidence to farmers who are thinking about doing the course

5. I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the recent Homeopathy at Wellie Level Course at Tetbury. I thought it was well taught, fun and stimulating. I've been on many training courses but very few have come up to this standard. The things I thought were really good about it were:

- Having a variety of presenters, this varies the pace and helps to underpin the teaching
- The cartoons – their images are a fun and memorable way of capturing the essence of remedies or principles
- The CDs – listening to them in the car or doing the ironing is a great way of absorbing information painlessly
- The excellent supporting notes, unlike many course notes they are really useful
- The enthusiasm of the all the presenters
- The variety of teas on offer

I hope I can now successfully apply the teaching for the benefit of my various flocks.

Very many thanks to all involved.

6. I want to say to you how useful the course has I have been able to treat cows so much better, we only lost 2 life calves out of 140 this spring season.

It is such a different approach to illness which has helped me looking at animals and human in a different way. My son and partner are good guinea pigs!

I am expecting a baby any day and hope to use the homeopathy with this as well. My mother in law, Doreen, wished she knew all about the treatment of homeopathy long time before.

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7. Many thanks for the HAWL course which I took part in at Holt Farms. The course was excellent, inspiring, informative, thought provoking and challenging. The way the course is set up is brilliant. Different tutors for every section was great because it kept everything interesting and fresh. Thanks to all the tutors for their time and enthusiasm you could tell they really enjoy homeopathy. The course was very good value for money, what with the CDs, folders, notes and tuition.

It has given me the confidence to use homeopathy as a first choice for prevention and cure. This not only works out

cheaper in terms of treatment, it also means all my milk stays in the tank! The results we have already got from using remedies have been beyond my hopes. I thoroughly recommend this course to all farmers interested in: reducing antibiotic use, improving health outcomes, having more treatment options, saving money or simply seeing things more holistically.

A farmer's homeopathic journey

The email above came from a North Devon dairy farmer who has picked up homeopathy and run with it. To help the learning he enlisted the help of a local homeopath who now visits the farm, treats the family and then acts as his mentor for the animals, which support has given him immense confidence and success, and time to send more updates!

2nd email We have now got lots more remedies and have only used 4 antibiotic tubes since the course and no injectables! Some wonderful successes. I am keeping records and am using around 15 remedies a day across 175 animals.

We are considering organic conversion as well so we have some big decisions to make in 2015! Still cannot get over the cost! I bought 15 new remedies last week and it cost £95, I was paying more than that for one bottle of antibiotics to treat 1-2 cows. My vets are not going to be happy after we have spoken next week. In your notes and on the course we do talk a bit about the progress of disease. Tony Pinkus at Ainsworths has worked a great deal on helping farmers through mastitis and TB problems. For the latter I am told by many that the nosode works very effectively in preventing TB.

The homeopath has been calling in each month and we are now flying with Homeopathy! Our vet and med bill has been halved every month since Nov, that's £3000 in our back pocket.

The lady at Galen said to me: "if all else fails try Arnica" what a great little quote. I remembered it when I was at my wits end with a calf that was dying. It had been treated for scours and pneumonia it had Ars Alb and then it wouldn't/couldn't stand and we treated with another remedy (Conium, I think) I then treated with antibiotics and it when down hill fast and was basically flat out and panting. So I remembered the quote and tried Arn 10m at 7pm and again at 10.30pm and went to bed. In the morning I fully expected the calf to be dead, but it was actually sat up which for a calf that had been flat out and hours from death was an excellent sight. I gave it more Arn and it stood up and drank from the water trough. By that evening it fed from the milk teat and went from strength to strength.

We eventually found the maintaining cause had been the starlings had been coming into the shed and shitting in the drinker. We cleaned it out and checked the next day and it was filthy again. So we have made up bird proof calf nut feeders and drinkers.

3rd Email. We are going well with homeopathy still. Our antibiotic usage has been reduced massively. 60% of cows dried off have had no antibiotic. Last year 100% had

antibiotics so we feel we can improve further as our herd SCC is still low

15 cows treated with antibiotics in the last year from 160 cows. Some of them were treated before leaving the herd anyway (remedy didn't sort them and neither did antibiotics) and some were treated because the vet was present. I think we can reduce this even further as I learn and gain confidence

We have had success with nosodes and individual treatments and I feel the herd are much more capable of helping themselves get better

Calves have been a bigger challenge but have recently discovered that Aconite worked well even after I felt I had missed the signs at the time.

We tend to get two main groups of scours problems 1 - starling faeces related (between Oct and March) and acidosis from over eating cake when we get hot days/cold nights etc.

4th email We have hardly used antibiotics this year and I would say the herd has never been healthier. We have had some interesting successes recently thought I would let you know. Our cows have struggled for a few years now on their feet and we have tried everything to improve the situation. No expense spared but with poor reward. I tried using Hep Sulp and Sil and Kreo to individual cows with issues but this was really firefighting. When our homoeopath was here in April we discussed this and I was talking about the effect on the feet I started to realise this called for Arnica. The cows are bruising their feet on stones and clippings in the summer particularly and when they are bulling especially. She agreed Arnica sounded like a good place to start and we decided Arn 30c in the water for 3 days, then once a week for 3 weeks and finally once a month for 3 months. The results have been incredible I would normally look at 5-7 sore feet a week and in the past 6 weeks I have looked at only 2 feet. The feet are harder, cleaner with much less bruising and impact damage. Our monthly visit by our foot trimmer was today, he checks all the cows before drying off. He was amazed today at how much harder the cows feet are, he is puzzled as it is only a month since he was here and he was very concerned at the soft feet.

Last week we had 2 poorly cows all brought on by the changes in the diet caused by the torrential rain.

Cow 1 had a big calf 10 days before but had calved it easily but she had yet to come up in her milk and then with the weather causing her diet to change she plummeted sunk eyes, not eating properly and loose stools

Cow 2 had been calved 6 weeks and was milking very well (46 litres, too well) she plummeted after the changes also down to 30 litres and just looked pinched her dung was stiff.

The vet was coming the next day anyway so I drenched them for rehydration and read up for a remedy. I decided it sounded like Lycopodium so I gave them an 200 c dose and waited for the vet. The next day he saw them and I felt they were a touch better he took temperatures and they both had high temps and they had loud chests. He felt they had IBR or pneumonia and prescribed 2 bottles of antibiotics each and an anti inflammatory as well. These situations are always awkward because you don't want them to think you are allowing the animal to suffer but luckily he did not have the antibiotics and I had to drive

and fetch them. I didn't go and fetch them and instead gave another dose of Lycopodium. By the morning I was very happy with them and the vet turned up worried because I had not picked up the drugs. I explained that they were both well and the worst one looked much better and he left puzzled. The 46 litre cow is back up in the 40s and looking very well. The other cow has continued to improve and 3 days after the vet examined her she came into the milking parlour and had her afterbirth showing. I was absolutely astonished because I had examined her, and the vet and neither of us knew she had not passed her afterbirth. What was amazing was that she had held it inside her womb but then as the lycopodium worked she opened her womb and pushed it all off. I have never seen this and it was definitely the lycopodium. The afterbirth was not as smelly as it should have been and some of the blood she passed with it was clotting and looked healthy.

Retained afterbirth

Such cases may need one of many remedies, if Caul does not help you need to take the case properly. This email from Chris Gosling is a good example:-

A couple of months ago an older cow calved and had a retained placenta which didn't respond to Caulophyllum. 3 days later I thought she seemed tired and droopy so I gave her Sepia IM when she was out in the field in front of our house. When I came back to the house from the farm a couple of hours later Tracey, who cleans for me, said "there is a cow who has been standing by the fence for the last hour peering in to the house, it is like she is looking for you". I went to see her and she still had the retained placenta so I gave her another dose of Sepia IM. She moved away and went to graze. When I saw her again an hour later the placenta had gone and she looked so much better.

Mastitis – human and animal

The value of looking at the whole picture cannot be overestimated, take the dreaded mastitis as an example. A shepherdess on the course told me it was her own experience of mastitis that convinced her homoeopathy worked, a severe case, her own doctor wanted her to stop breast feeding, take antibiotics and have an operation all of which she refused. Her homoeopath gave her Lachesis "partly because in the consultation I never stopped talking". Delightful because that is so much the picture of Lachesis, they talk and talk, but would the same apply to an animal? I asked around and Jill from the Exmoor OFSG sent the following

Just thought I'd let you know that this remedy came up at one of our support group meetings, which we all find extremely useful by the way, and we worked it out with Geoff for "black udder" - this is not just dairy cows - sheep are prone to this as well. This is Clostridial mastitis and Lachesis was recommended for right side and Secale for left side.

If you are not familiar with Lachesis look it up, in a good Materia Medica or on the web.

Lambing bag remedies

Lynn Hutchison's thoughts on using remedies when assisting ewes in the field.

Caulophyllum 30, ring womb, eases dilation of cervix in 1st stage, tones up uterine muscles in 2nd stage

Hypericum 200, relieves pain, esp. post partum paralysis, good to help ewe struggling to stand after labour, good for assisted ewes

Aconite 200, ewes in shock, contractions stopped or week, lambs in shock, hypothermic, not peeing.

Arnica 10m, after lambing, reduces bleeding, bruising, redness and swelling, prevents infection, aids recovery of ewe and lamb esp. after assisted birth

Calendula 200, aids cleansing, healing

Carbo veg 200, corpse reviver, collapse, cyanosed lambs

Tungsten 30, lambs suffering from long birth, oxygen starvation, weak and cyanosed (blue gums) lambs

Arnica 30, lambs with swollen head, from long births, reduces swelling, shock

Rescue Remedy, reviving lambs and ewes, trauma, shock

Dosage. Give remedy more frequently in acute situation, if remedy doesn't have effect after two doses 5- 10 mins apart try next appropriate remedy, if it works but then symptoms return repeat remedy as long as needed, if two remedies indicated alternate them every 5 -10 mins, see also lambing difficulties remedy sheets.

So what of 2016?

Basic courses

These will be held at Tetbury every Spring and Autumn. Courses can be held at other venues but only where another organisation requests, organises, recruits students. and supports financially. "Away" courses cost between £1500 and £2000 per day depending on the distance from Tetbury.

On Farm Support Groups (OFSG).

Meetings will be held as requested and in as many areas as possible. They are designed to revive and revise. Gill Ainge hosted one in Somerset recently and wrote that *Geoff was great. It was brilliant to re-awaken my thinking again to remedies as I had lost confidence a little on going beyond my regular remedies of choice.* If you would like to host one please let us know. There is no need to provide refreshment, we just need a farm to meet on and animals to look at. Attendees come if they can and bring their own refreshments. The meeting lasts three hours, usually 10am -1pm.

Creating a HAWL network

We plan to extend the HAWL experience and outreach by following up the courses and building on the existing support groups by facilitating activities, meeting and conversations throughout the country. Our aim is for an experienced farmer to co-ordinate this network, working with HAWL farmers to get the

message out to other farmers and to consumers, to arrange "get-togethers" where farmers can share ideas, experiences and possibly "mentoring". We want to build on the courses and get HAWL out and about in the country so more farmers, more consumers and more people generally – inside and outside of farming – know what homoeopathy can do. If you would like to help us and be a part of this please let Margaret know.

HAWL finances

Of course all our plans depend on funding. Last year our very generous benefactors, the Sheepdrove Trust and the Oppenheimer Foundation each guaranteed HAWL an annual £10,000 income for the next three years. Additionally the Tanner Trust donated £2000 specifically to establish on farm support groups and Valerie Pratt, a former student, very generously sent us £250. All of which gave us an income last year of £22,250. This covers any short falls in both course costs and OFSG meetings, giving us great flexibility, it also means we can keep the student numbers small so we give a better quality of course, as well as covering general office expenses like telephones, paper, postage, website, a regular secretary for one day a week, expenses for conference attendance, advertising etc.

A strength and weakness of HAWL has been that my contribution has always been as a volunteer, a sort of match funding to our benefactors' considerable support. However it has meant that a huge amount of time and work has not been covered by the HAWL budget. While I remain dedicated to HAWL and intend to maintain an active role in its future we have to recognise that this is not a realistic basis for future development and will have to be changed over the next year. I estimate we need to raise an additional £50,000 a year to fulfill our aspirations of spreading the HAWL message, skill and knowledge further into the farming community, into the veterinary world, towards retailers and consumers, and into farming policy – and wouldn't it be good if my dream of running our own Farm Homoeopathy conference could happen soon?

Meanwhile, if any former student feels they could volunteer to organise OFSGs or give talks at meetings, to promote HAWL, write articles for publication in the agricultural press or raise funds we should be thrilled to have their help. You don't have to have deep pockets or know someone who does to help us. Every little helps, whether its money, time or skills.

So that's it folks. Hope some of this has been a help and has recharged your enthusiasm. Please send lots more emails about your own thoughts and experiences. Information exchange is so very vital.

Chris Lees

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