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OMSCO OFFERS AN 'ALTERNATIVE' TO ANTIBIOTICS

The Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative (OMSCo), the UK's leading and longest established organic dairy cooperative, is to offer funding to members wishing to attend homeopathy courses. In a move, that is the first of its kind by a dairy cooperative, OMSCo has agreed to pay half of the fees towards Homeopathy at Wellie Level (HAWL) three day courses.

Under the organic standards, the routine use of medicines such as antibiotics is prohibited and homeopathy (under veterinary guidance) is encouraged as an effective alternative and a powerful tool in the maintenance of herd health. With increasing levels of disease on the farm over the years OMSCo believes farmers need another tool to complement conventional treatments. The HAWL three day course is designed to introduce the concepts and principles of homeopathy and to give farmers the ability to implement its use on their own farm.

OMSCo Farmer, Tim Downes, from Shropshire first started using homeopathy on his farm 20 years ago. He attended the HAWL course in 2001 and has drastically cut the use of antibiotics on his farm. Tim says, "Homeopathy works hand-in-hand with other management techniques such as nutrition and cleanliness. Since practicing on our farm we have seen a real improvement in herd health. It has also really cut down our veterinary bills – we haven't used milking cow tubes on the farm for the past two years and only use approximately 3% dry cow therapy."

Tim goes on to explain some of the different remedies he uses on the farm, "For TB testing we have found that Aconite is really effective, there are no conventional methods that can be administered as quickly and easily. Mastitis is another area where we always rely on homeopathic remedies as our first port of call. Learning to recognise which treatments fit the particular animal symptoms and keeping good records has given us the confidence to administer remedies such as Belladonna (better known as deadly night shade) in potency to treat a hot hard quarter."

More...

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Trevor Adams from HAWL comments “We are delighted that OMSCo has taken the step to support members who want to attend the HAWL course. We believe that homeopathy has a vital role to play in good animal health management, especially in the organic sector. For the farmer struggling to maintain herd health and reduce antibiotic usage it can be difficult to get help as there are still only about a dozen qualified homoeopathic vets working in farm practice. Our course gives the farmer the knowledge and confidence to use homeopathic remedies effectively on their own farm.”

The three day HAWL course is split over a period of several weeks, allowing farmers to practice what they have learned between sessions. Day one covers the basic principles of homeopathy, learning what a homeopath looks for when observing animals and six remedies which can be added into everyday farm management. Day two covers assessing a sick animal and choosing the right symptoms to help find an appropriate remedy, and day three looks at the longer view, learning how to build homeopathy into the farm year. The next available course is open for applications and starts on March 22nd at Broadfield Farm, Gloucestershire by kind permission of HRH The Prince Of Wales. Booking forms can be downloaded from www.hawl.co.uk

Ends

For more information contact Emily Enright, Abby Richardson or Kirsty Gyton at Grayling PR on 0117 922 7799 or e-mail emily.enright@uk.grayling.com

Editors notes:

About OMSCo

OMSCo is the UK's leading and longest established organic dairy cooperative uniquely focused on the production and supply of organic milk. With nationwide membership, OMSCo now supplies the majority of organic milk produced in this country from milk fields offering the most cost effective collection. The result is the best blend of stability, efficiency and highest possible farm gate returns. OMSCo is dedicated to building a sustainable long term organic milk market in the UK – to the benefit of farmers, processors, manufacturers and consumers.

OMSCo Organic Milk Market Report

OMSCo will be publishing its annual Organic Milk Market Report in February. This will provide an overview of market conditions, predictions for supply and demand growth and analysis of the main challenges facing the British organic dairy industry.

About HAWL:

HAWL is a non-profit making organisation, which does not sell the farmer anything other than knowledge. The aim of HAWL is to educate farmers in the use of homeopathy. HAWL are the only organisation to provide a structured course of homeopathy for farmers in the UK. To date over 250 farmers have completed the course.

The reasons HAWL consider homeopathy courses necessary are:

- There is a large amount of supposedly homeopathic medicine being sold to farmers who have no understanding of what homeopathy is or what they are trying to do. The individuals selling it may have no veterinary or homeopathic training and are unable to give back up or advice if it doesn't work or is used inappropriately. We wish to empower the farmer by teaching him to understand his own treatments.
- Homeopathy is a powerful tool in the maintenance of health and treatment of disease. With increasing levels of disease on the farm over the years despite intensive drug use the farmer needs another tool to complement his conventional treatment and husbandry.

Why Homeopathy?

- Illness is largely caused by stress lowering the immune defences, which allows disease to flourish. This has been repeatedly demonstrated in human trials. Homeopathy works firstly by increasing the ability of the animal or human to deal with stress and hence avoid becoming ill. Secondly homeopathy stimulates the often poorly functioning innate ability our animals and we have to cure ourselves once we become ill.
- This is opposite and therefore complementary to conventional medicine. Homeopathy deals with the beast, conventional medicine with the bug.
- Homeopathy uses its medicines at exceedingly high dilutions. This means there are no residues passed on to the consumer or the environment. This is mandatory for the organic farmer but obviously highly desirable for the conventional farmer and the image of their retail outlets.

What is Homeopathy?

- Homeopathy is a modern system of medicine and is the second most widely used in the world (herbalism is first, conventional medicine is third). It is widely available for people on the NHS and repeated trials published in the Lancet (main doctors' journal) have demonstrated its efficacy. It has been the preferred medicine of the royal family for over 100 years. In veterinary medicine it is largely unknown and the profession is mostly ignorant of its methodology or uses. It is not taught at veterinary schools and is used much less frequently in animals than in people. However there are about 150 vets using homeopathy in the UK, the majority in companion animal practice. Sadly many vets discredit it despite having absolutely no knowledge of its methodology or practice."