

This is Farm Homoeopathy

Because there is nothing in it and there is no possible explanation for its action it is widely understood that homoeopathy cannot work... This perceived wisdom seems reasonable enough and there is general acceptance of it within science, the media and the opinion makers. Where humans offer their own story to insist that homoeopathy has worked for them their testimony is dismissed as anecdotal and any effect seen as placebo, or at best effective because someone listened to their problems. One might be tempted to follow the rationale that the only effect is psychosomatic but for the fact that those most pragmatic of people, farmers, are using it on their animals and finding that it works. So while the message about this fallacy called homoeopathy has been very widely reported, it would appear that no one has remembered to explain this to the animals. From large commercial robotic dairy herds to smallholders with a few animals farmers are using remedies they chose for themselves and finding them to be very effective.

What the farmers say

John and Lizzie Ridout run a mixed organic farm which includes 30 suckler cows (South Devon), a handful of pigs, 420 sheep split into two flocks, Poll Dorset and Lleyn, 8000 laying hens and 2000 rearers, bought in as day old chicks. They had heard about homoeopathy but never used it, so after five years of organic production and moving to a new farm, Lizzie decided she needed to know more and went on a course to learn how to use it. Sitting at her kitchen table, during a short break from lambing, Lizzie explained how it has changed their approach.

"I use it all the time now. With the sheep it's made a HUGE difference, they do seem to respond really well, you can see them reacting. Lambing – we're not losing the lambs like we used to. Mastitis - we're not getting it, or if we do we can save her and still have a value to her at the end as a cull animal.

We do try to do more prevention, avoid problems if you can, like with the sheep, giving them something well before lambing. Last year we brought the sheep in four weeks before lambing so they had *Caulophyllum* every week, it seems to make the pelvis a lot more flexible, bigger and more open, the lamb comes out all by itself and I remember saying that lambing was boring because we don't have to touch any sheep. I shall never say that again! This year they didn't get their remedy four weeks before and they are not popping the lambs out like before. We have had a run when I need go in and give an individual squirt and put my hand in and help open the cervix, it's brilliant, but that's when you start introducing infection. So next year those sheep will come in early and they will have their *Caulophyllum* because I do not fancy wrestling sheep every night of the week.

When we were conventional we always had a pot of anti-inflammatories or pain killer and there comes a point when you think "I don't want all that anymore, there's got to be something else", especially, when you've got a recurring problem, you have got to look at that and say "why is this recurring?"

Homoeopathy does make you think there is more to it than just that animal having a problem. You need to be able to think back and ask why and homoeopathy makes you do that.

I suppose we mostly use it because we have very good results with it, more so than using conventional.

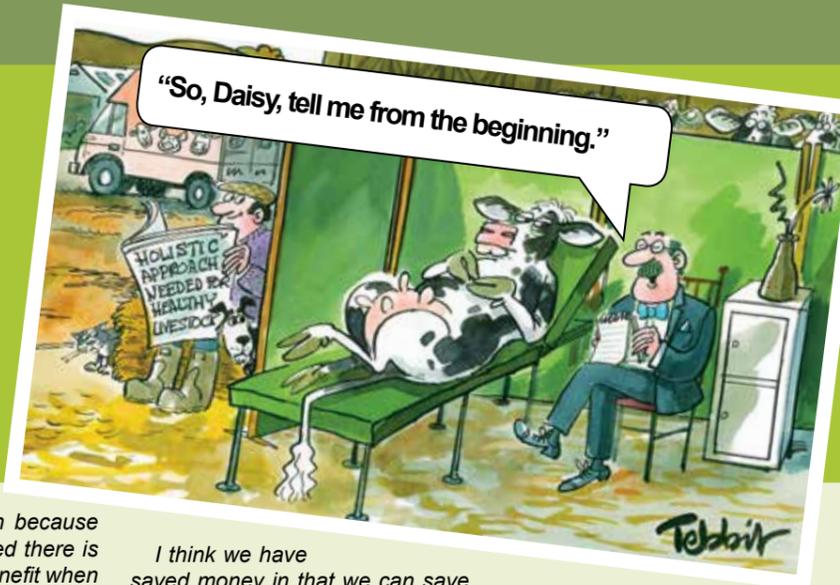
What's the benefit? Organically, as we are producing food, we do not have to worry that the egg or meat is going to fail

a test or upset any humans further down the chain because there are residues. Antibiotics have been so overused there is immunity; they use it so regularly you don't find the benefit when it's needed. We know we can go on treating that animal as long as is necessary and know that whatever happens it is not going to cause a problem further down the food chain. We know, with the way things are in farming, we cannot downgrade an egg or a piece of meat without financially finding it tough.

How do we measure it? Well for example, you are not losing so much financially, not necessarily to the vet, but in other ways. You are not having an animal drop down dead and being left with nothing, you have still got a value to that animal even if she is only half doing her job.

Or a lamb, even if it's orphaned off you've still got that lamb alive because you have been able to keep it going with homoeopathic remedies. We have had little lambs with only their heads stuck out, they come out and their tongue is so swollen they cannot suck mum or from a bottle, you have to tube them and *Arnica* on a regular basis takes the swelling down, it's invaluable.

We had an awful summer with the hens this year, chicks coming in with yolk sac infections which lowers their immunity, any little bit of stress means they pick up any bug going especially when they are coming into lay, so our egg production drops, or they drop down dead. We cannot just use main stream treatment because we cannot sell the eggs for a week or so. We had been pulling our hair out until we found a most wonderful homoeopathic poultry vet who does everything homoeopathically. He has been making us stuff to treat chicks and birds and it's been fantastic.



I think we have saved money in that we can save livestock life and still have a value to that animal whether it be to a cull or to its full potential as a producing animal. It's a nice achievement to know it's all been done naturally, you are staying as true as you can to the organic philosophy, it does give quite a nice buzz.

And the Corpse Reviver, that's been invaluable when you have a really strong calving or lambing and you are on death's door with the animal...straight into the mouth and you can almost see the animal take a breath, that's been invaluable, after calving too, even John is programmed into ask "where is the Corpse Reviver?"



Homoeopathy helps the Ridouts run their business more efficiently and, talking to other farmers, it appears that the Ridouts story is echoed up and down the UK. It would seem that despite this apparent lack of "evidence" farmers do find homoeopathy effective.



Meg Thorpe.

You definitely need to go on the course to learn about how to use homoeopathy otherwise it is just a stab in the dark. The whole understanding of it, it's so different, you have to get your

head round the concepts, it's completely opposite to what we have all learnt. It doesn't matter how much you read the books, you need to go and speak to likeminded people who have used it for years, hear it from the horse's mouth so to speak.

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“It suits the way I want to farm”

John Bale manages Downe Farm in Gloucestershire, 2000 Organic acres of dairy, (two herds 215 and 138 British Friesian plus followers) beef (raised off the back of the dairy herd selling up to 380 per year) and cereal production, 80% kept for home consumption.

“The stimulus was going organic. Making you look at doing it differently is a plus point, and in trying to use less antibiotic you need another tool, and it’s a MASSIVE tool, so to me it’s a win win situation. I see the health of the herd being good from its use, my feeling is that if it didn’t work I wouldn’t be wasting my money on it. I spend £3500 a year on homoeopathy, but it’s just part and parcel of the Organic range, the inspectors can see I use it but actually, if I were a conventional farmer, I would certainly go on using it. It helps to build my cows’ immunity from the beginning.

It’s catching things early, it’s all part of good stockmanship, if you are good to the cows they are good to you. We don’t spend so much on vets bills. It’s all part of the fight to keep a healthy herd.”



“It’s a MASSIVE tool”

Andrew Brewer farms 600 acres in Cornwall, raising 700 dairy cows of various breeds and crosses with 400 followers on an outdoor grazing system. Calves are removed at birth and fed colostrum and then raised outdoors in large groups on ad lib milk.

“We are not organic but I went on the course to learn how to use homoeopathy properly and to try something new. You never stop learning and I wanted to see if we could save money and use our own knowledge rather than buy ready mixed products. We had a few health problems and I saw it as a less intrusive method, give it in the water or a squirt on the nose rather than jab in a needle.

Our vet was quite supportive, his father was an Austrian vet who used a lot of homoeopathy. We used it quite a lot at first, now we have eased off a bit because the herd health is much improved. We are proactive, we have a thorough vaccination programme, but we use a lot of homoeopathy through stressful periods like calving.

I use it because it often works better than conventional things, especially if you catch it early before the problem is too clinical. You have to be on the ball and act early and give a remedy, it’s no good thinking you can wait and see what she’s like next milking. She will either get better or worse, but you can do something there and then. The way you chose a remedy fits in with how I look at the stock. A good stock person can tell a cow is not well before she knows it herself. We can calve 50 calves a day. You have to stop and listen before you go in, you can tell if there is a problem from listening but some people just cannot hear it. If you act early it’s one step, if you wait it’s 20 steps.

Cost and reward are big benefits to me. It is rewarding to know you can take early action and we have less losses, lower vet bills but then we run a simple system. We use homoeopathy in stressful situations and we see the animals recover faster. A cow with milk fever had managed to get stuck in a ditch. We gave her the usual infusion, gave her some Aconite and hauled her out, she walked away immediately and had no further problem. I would have expected her to be in a poor state for a couple of hours but she was fine’.

“We use homoeopathy in stressful situations and we see the animals recover faster. I use it because it often works better than conventional things”



Wendy Ball, HND, stockwoman with a large dairy herd

“It is effective in prevention, as a prophylaxis, and it maintains health in the herd. It minimises the time an animal is in distress. You can give early treatment and cure something in the early stages when you act soon enough. You get fewer chronic complaints when you treat the animal acutely BEFORE the need to call the vet, when something is wrong but there is nothing really to see. It’s that gut instinct when you know all’s not right but feel stupid calling the vet because there is nothing to go on”



John Newman manages the 650 hectares of organic land at Abbey Home Farm in Cirencester with 25 dairy shorthorns, 60 pedigree Gloucester suckler cows, a closed flock of 750 Lleyn ewes, 300 hectares of cereals, 15 hectares of vegetables, some breeding sows and two boars, 350 laying hens and 4 flocks of 170 table birds. Milk is pasteurised in their own dairy, some made into cheeses, yoghurts, butter and cream, all sold, along with the meat, eggs and vegetables, in their own farm shop. He and his two stockmen have all been on the HAWL course.

“It’s being able to do something early and not just sit there and wait. I think that’s where it fits so well with Organic farming because you’ve said ‘Right I want to take control, I want to have more input about what I am doing, I want to do things in a different way’ so you look for the things that help you do it.

For the guys here it just makes things a bit easier, together with the feeling you have done something yourself. I have saved the hassle of a sick animal, saved the cost, done something myself. It’s easy to administer, spraying a nose, putting something in the water, it’s not difficult. I think it makes a good stockman feel more empowered. Vets are fantastic but there was that feeling, (when I think back to when I was a conventional farmer and before I used homoeopathy) that while there were little things that you knew you could deal with, when you called the vet there was that big gulf, between you sitting there and looking at a problem and then the magic man turning up and saying ‘oh it’s this, give it that and it will be fine’. Now there is a step in between.

Clearly we are trying to create systems so that you don’t have the problem in the first place but things will happen that you did not expect and if you can come some way towards resolving them without asking for help you feel you are much more connected to what you are doing rather than just sitting there saying ‘Well this has happened and I don’t know what it is and can you come out and have a look?’ So the homoeopathy is part of it, but it also drives it in a strange sort of way.

I think that people who get good results with it are almost already there in terms of their stockmanship, they are already very conscious of what the animal is doing. They have not necessarily identified that there was a cause, but after they have done the HAWL course they think ‘oh yes it was when we moved them into that field or the wind blew from that direction or something frightening happened’ so then you either think ‘Oh OK that helps me find the better remedy’ or you start to think ‘well if I am going to do this how can I do it in a different way so that I don’t actually create the situation?’ It’s a bit like a risk assessment, so you are managing your stock differently because you are thinking ‘well if it is like this then I maybe don’t do that today I’ll leave it until another day’ Certainly when I talk to the stockmen about what we are doing, and did that work or didn’t it, that’s the kind of response that I get, it’s the feeling that they have done something. Add that to the management and stockmanship, it all pulls together.”



David Wilson manages Duchy Home Farm in Gloucestershire, 1900 acres of organic arable, vegetable, dairy, sheep and beef enterprises

“I think homoeopathy works best when a stockman embraces the whole topic and understands it otherwise they tend to use it as a bit of a bolt on. There is nothing easier than saying ‘it’s got a high temperature, right give it twelve mls of Engemycin’, the decision making process is clearer, it does not require as much expertise. But I think using homoeopathy satisfies a very good stockman in a way that antibiotics don’t. We use it all the time, that is what underlies our approach to farming anyway, avoiding the problems in the first place. You know that at certain times you are likely to get problems and we use the basic preventatives for things like NFE and Foul of the Foot, and the common remedies for ease of calving and lambing as well as for bruising and things. Probably 15 to 20 of those in everyday use and then if we have specific problems we may ask for advice. For example, we had a whole bunch of ewes with really bad orf which got very infected I think it was all round their vulvas, everywhere, and the vet had said ‘all these have got to go onto antibiotic treatment’ but with help from a homoeopathic pharmacy we cleared it up without using any antibiotic at all. We will use homoeopathy and use conventional medicines along side if we think we need to. It does depend to a large degree on the individual who is administering the treatment as to what precise approach is taken.

Richard Brown is the dairy manager supplying milk to Waitrose from the 155 Ayreshires.



“When we first started using it at my previous farm I hadn’t really poo-pooed it but it was always an unknown and that was when I saw the most dramatic effects.”

“I think with conventional medicines you can overcome bad management, keeping animals drugged up in a bad environment whereas with homoeopathy I don’t think it would work, it all goes hand in hand, the good management the attention to detail and the homoeopathy it’s a whole package. The aim is to keep them healthy, our cell counts are below 100.

Homoeopathy just fits in, it’s nice to be able to do something. You’ve got an animal which is not quite right, you wouldn’t want to treat it conventionally, but you can give it a remedy and perhaps perk it up and you haven’t had to use any drugs. You never really know if it would have got better anyway but you like to think that what you have done has made it feel better, it’s

“Using homoeopathy means we can sell our eggs. As organic egg producers we do not have to withdraw the eggs which we would have to do if we used drugs. We were with another vet company and they just wanted to sell us drugs, vaccinate right, left and centre and give them antibiotics as soon as they had a twitch of anything. For us that’s not why we are organic, we want to do it properly”. Lizzie Ridout



Nick Fuge, assistant manager to David Wilson and in charge of the beef and sheep enterprises agrees, it helps him do his job more effectively and avoid problems.

“We mainly use homoeopathy at times of stress and for the beef and sheep that’s really at weaning because that’s their biggest problem and ours. Otherwise they are outside on grass with one or two offspring or with mum and it’s a life of Riley really! But it’s been a big help at weaning. Previously there would be a lot of shouting, bellowing, bleating, and there is much less of that. It was the biggest check to their growth, we would lose animals a couple of weeks later, they would go off their food, which now they don’t, and we would have a few cases of illness, perhaps pneumonia, and now we don’t.

It’s all part and parcel of sorting out the system, we wean later now and we use a gentler system, we creep feed as well as use homoeopathy in the water and we get a lot less noise and no check in production. It’s been a big improvement.

They are not so upset by the separation, it covers the grief and the stress, and it’s easy. I spray them on the nose and put it into the water for 2 or 3 days afterwards.

It helps us to be proactive on a larger scale, that’s its biggest benefit, we can be ahead of the game. It helps general welfare. I would definitely go on using it if I was on a conventional farm, you can work on a group basis, help a whole group. The cost is negligible, it’s pence. It makes you feel better. I have seen its effect for myself. As a stockman you have FAILED if something is wrong with them, especially with the beef and sheep, it’s not like a dairy herd, they are not under great stress. The only critical time really is weaning and it helps HUGEELY.”



part of the satisfaction of the job, it’s good to feel you can do something. Basically these are my cows, you’ve got your pride, you make that extra effort. It’s about knowing they are happy, it’s nice to feel I can do something without calling out the vet.

Without homoeopathy you would have to wait for it to be more obviously ill or you would have to give it antibiotics or what ever was necessary. That’s not satisfying. I always feel slightly miffed if I have had to treat an animal with an antibiotic, something has gone wrong and it’s annoying, you almost have to give in. In a way you feel you haven’t done your job properly if you have to give drugs. With a dairy herd it’s getting everything right, homoeopathy plays a part, you would not want to do without it, it’s in the background. “



John and Sue Nattle farm in partnership with their daughter on their 100 hectare organic dairy farm in Devon. Their 100 strong herd of British Friesians averages about 5000 litres which they are happy with. They block calve inside 12 weeks in Feb/March and the newly calved go out the next day and come in in November. There are also about 100 followers, replacements and beef crosses. Their culling rate is about 15%.

“We first used Homoeopathy when we joined Omsco, they used to do a “tip of the month” and we knew a local homoeopathic vet who seemed a bit whacky and weird and he gave us preparations - some worked and others didn’t and we didn’t know why. The HAWL course clarified things for us, how it might work and how to make it work better for us. We definitely understood more, and some things worked spectacularly well and others didn’t. I just don’t know enough really so I concentrate on using things that do work well. If I need support I can ring a homoeopathic vet.

I mostly use single remedies, nosodes don’t seem to work so well. Our cell count runs at 100-150, I tend to worry if it is too low, will they fight off diseases? Our culling rate is about 15%, (the oldest cow is 15) mostly for mastitis, lameness is not a problem (we don’t chase them or keep them shut in a shed). It’s a very fertile herd, we serve in a 12 week block, we put a remedy in the water trough, Sue sorts that out and it’s not a problem, only 3 did not get back in calf this year.”

“We don’t get pneumonia in the calves now because we changed the sheds, but in the past we did and Geoff the vet gave us the remedies and it stopped all the problems in those which had not been treated with antibiotics.”

“If we do get a calf gasping then a remedy sorts it out, we know which ones to choose now. We lose very few calves at birth, compared with what we hear from other farmers and the vets. Our stock are quite healthy, it seems to lift everything up a little, you’ve got happier, healthier animals right through the herd.”



Steve Castle, now farming in Zambia learnt about homoeopathy while in the UK

"For me, the ability to have a number of complementary livestock management tools available is invaluable, and from taking over a mismanaged, low production bunch of cattle, using these tools, I have brought weaning percentages up to 88%, herd health issues (foot-rot, abscess, mange, eye infections) have reduced to virtually non-existent and we have a healthy, content herd.

I think the secret has been to incorporate homoeopathy with other beneficial methodologies to make up a strong tool-kit. As with most non-conventional approaches, there have been some interesting debates with other stock-men on the pros and cons of treating with homeopathic remedies, but in the end, the results have shown the benefits. I spend less, have healthy stock, do not contaminate the land or people with chemicals and drugs, as well as being really close to my animals."

Cathy Swingland and her husband have a mixed 300 acre farm in East Sussex with laying hens, Romney x Kent ewes lambing outside in March, a single suckler herd of Sussex cattle and pigs which are moved between woodland and pasture according to the season.

"We began using homoeopathy about 6 years ago, I did a course on its use. The effect was not instant but the change in my mindset was crucial and it had far reaching effects on everybody here, in a broad way. It gave me an interesting holistic way of looking, empowering, daunting, it made me realise "I can really make a difference, I can avoid having a problem by doing these things, rather than waiting for something to go wrong" and we would reach for it as a first thought. Nowadays the animals' health is pretty robust and so we use less and less but it has certainly contributed to getting a healthy farm. The way it makes you think is so radically different that getting your head round it makes you look at the animals and everything about them in a totally different way and that's a HUGE benefit that you simply cannot dismiss. It's fundamental, this way of looking at things makes a difference even if you never open a bottle.

It's very frustrating to talk to people who have a mind set about "proof" to suit regulations, clearly homoeopathy is not testable in that way. It's to do with creating a healthy set up and for that homoeopathy is very positive and useful. It's all part of our philosophy. We are resolutely Organic and sell directly to customers, many of them chefs who come to visit the farm and understand that we rear animals in a more natural way, for people who value the process of production. It makes the whole process meaningful."



Chris and Nick Gosling run a 375 acres family dairy and arable farm in Wiltshire producing milk, butter and cream sold via Able and Cole. The farm has been in the family for three generations. The farm is one of the very few in UK to have a local homoeopathic vet prepared to come out to them. Working together has increased understanding and confidence to a point where, unlike some farmers, they have great success in treating mastitis.

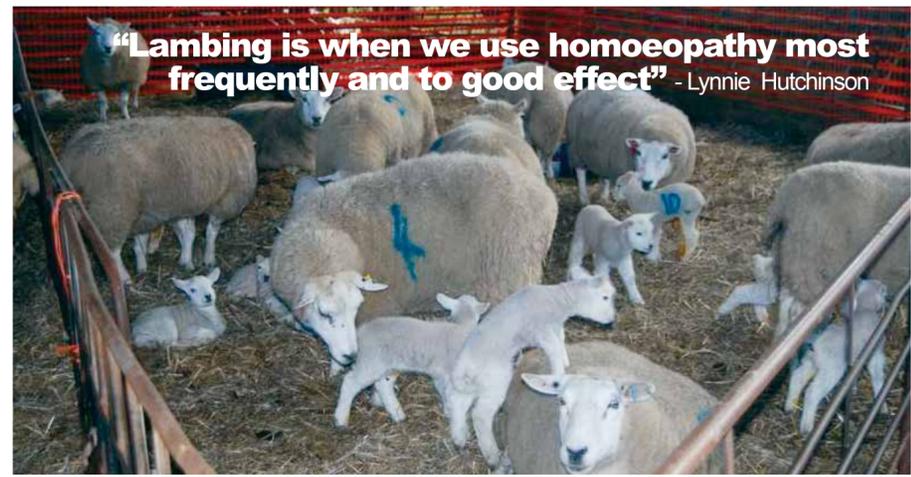
"I am in charge of the dairy cows. I use homoeopathy a great deal, for everyday incidents, for prevention and as a treatment. There are lots of reasons why I use it and lots of benefits. It's gentler than drugs, there are no side effects, no stressful injections. The animals quickly return to good health, they make a full recovery, I am not just treating the symptoms. I can do something when conventional treatment fails, when there is none, and often because I am confident that a remedy will work as well (or better) than the conventional alternative. I can do something to avoid the problems which might occur after emotional disturbances. I am very confident it works because I have watched chronically ill cows recover back to really good health. I have seen mastitis improve or even vanish in 12-36 hours, I have seen the cell count reduce and mastitis incidence decline, and I have watched calves not feeding well or those with scours recover very quickly."

Lynnie Hutchison runs organic sheep with her husband on their farm in Sussex.

"When you look closely at your flock, and we started with just 20 so could know them individually much better than we do now with much larger flocks, you notice that one is not quite right but that conventionally speaking there's nothing wrong. We were fed up with the conventional advice of wait and see if it develops into something nasty or college recommendations to vaccinate against everything just in case. So in a search for things to help the sheep have excellent health not just absence of disease we started using homoeopathy to treat sheep who seemed a bit off colour but had not yet developed a disease with a conventional diagnosis. We quickly realised the power of homoeopathy on diagnosed illness and accidents and initially had much success with these cases. It's stress free to administer so doesn't compound the situation, often it's given before things get really bad. It seems to help the sheep get back to where they should be health and vitality wise, giving their system a nudge in the direction of healing itself.

We've used homoeopathy more and more with increased confidence and understanding. We can deal with familiar problems in the flock such as Orf and foot rot quickly, cheaply and confidently and these are now very rarely seen in the stock. We have also been able to deal with new problems in the flock quickly and with confidence discussing and questioning issues with our conventional vets. Lambing is the time when we use homoeopathy the most frequently and to good effect - our students have been very interested in this approach too.

You can never do a double blind trial but the results in our flock have more than convinced us of its worth."



"Lambing is when we use homoeopathy most frequently and to good effect" - Lynnie Hutchison

Liz Best has a Gloucestershire County Council mixed farm of 120 acres which they converted to organic in 2002. With 10 breeding ewes and 2 sows, milking 65 pedigree Holstein Friesians, selling milk to First Milk, raising their own replacements and selling on one month old continental X calves at £300 per calf, they have won the First Milk Quality Milk National Award twice and the Regional Award for the last seven years.

"We began to look at using homoeopathy when we were in conversion. I was concerned about not being able to use antibiotics for the dairy cows. When I first started I was rather sceptical but was willing to give it a go, now I would not be willing to go back to full time use of conventional drugs. After a couple of years using it we had reduced problems hugely. I think homoeopathy is wonderfully useful in all sorts of ways. We do not see the vet very often, we have healthier animals, it keeps costs down. Our culling rate is 15% (any lower means we could not bring in fresh heifers) and we have loads of cows over ten lactations, so 12 plus years.

We generally have no problem with Orf but the time I bought in feed troughs we had a big outbreak with the lambs. Homoeopathy cleared all that up. I use it on all the stock and I do not now have so many niggling troubles, for instance since I have been using homoeopathy during calving I have only had to call the vet for things like retained cleansings once in the last two years, before it would have been several times, perhaps ten per year? I would certainly go on using it if we were not Organic.

I use Aconite and Arnica for all sorts of things almost every day. I can see it is difficult for the ordinary farmer to get their head round, but if you start with simple things it is easy to see the results."



"When I first started I was rather sceptical but was willing to give it a go, now I would not be willing to go back to full time use of conventional drugs" - Liz Best



David Haine, and his mother Jennifer Haine employ herdsman Anthony Curnow for their organic herd of 200 milk certified cows, mainly Holstein and Friesian (and a few Guernsey and Jersey). They use a Lely Astronaut free access robotic milking system. David has owned the farm since 1998 and was already trying to minimise the use of chemical wormers and antibiotics. Homoeopathy was used occasionally however, since Anthony joined them in 2010, they say he has transformed the herd.

ANTHONY: "After the HAWL course I was unable to use homoeopathy regularly until I came here just over a year ago. When I first got here there was a group of about twenty cows who hadn't been bulling. After I treated them with homoeopathy they all bulled and all held. That did it for me really. Now we use homoeopathy routinely - and they all cycle normally.

I use Arnica. It looks after any bruising - it takes care of all their knocks. Dairy cows lead a stressful life - their life places huge demands on them. Anything you do to them, any contact with them is hugely stressful for them. Everything we do is about trying to minimise stress. Our calves are all on demand feeders - we get very little scours and pneumonia is very low - Aconite works well at the first sign.

I use Aconite and Arnica for any stressful situation - difficult calvings, crush work, moving them, dehorning calves - it's the first thing I grab and works a treat. At the weekend a cow got pushed into the feed trough and was stuck against the live (mains-wired) electric fence and we heard her bellowing. She was sat in shock and shaking like a leaf. We rushed off to get Aconite and Rescue Remedy. She sat there for a while then got up. That evening I was able to AI her she was so calm. We don't tend to have major calving issues. I've only had to use Caulophyllum once - on a pig that always aborted. I use remedies for retained cleansings - I don't use antibiotics at all (viz. for cleansing) - they're a waste of time and make things worse.

Overall we get very little mastitis. Over the past twelve months it's been mainly sub-clinical mastitis. (Sub-clinical means a peak in white blood cells which is flagged up by the Lely robot which routinely checks the milk.) I find that remedies and massage work. If they do become really clinically ill then I'll step in with antibiotics if necessary. They both have their place but if I absolutely had to choose between homoeopathy and conventional, I'd give up conventional first."

DAVID: "It's rarely an issue. Our clinical mastitis is about 1%. Sub-clinical is about 5-6%, down from about 20%. The self access relives all the stress of high yield."

ANTHONY: "They are so unstressed that instead of going into the dry period exhausted they're going into it fit and well-fleshed and chilled out before drying off. Here, rather than using homoeopathy for putting problems right, we use it in a complementary capacity - as part of our routine management"

DAVID: "It definitely reduces our vet bill - it's more than that - it does things the vets can't do. We thought we'd have to sell the non-bulling cows until Anthony came here."

Charles Philips manages 1700 acres. They produce organic meat and game with 900 ewes, 100 beef cattle and 800 acres of cereal production. Stockmen are all encouraged to use homoeopathy as much as possible.



Robert Mann who runs a beef suckler herd as well as sheep in Somerset.

"I've been using homoeopathy for over 10 years. I wanted to farm organically and to reduce vets bills. I learnt from Ainsworths and books and experience, and I use it because it works. Our vet bills are low and illness is unusual now so in fact we do not use much homoeopathy. If there is any question of compromising welfare, then I use conventional treatment. Our cows are long lived.

I use it because it is so easy to administer. Last year, we lost some sheep from liver fluke and the others were unthrifty. We were prescribed liver support remedies from a homoeopathic vet and administered the remedy in spray form. The sheep were just run through a race and their noses, mouths etc. were sprayed - very easy and effective - no more sheep died. Our conventional vet was amazed by the result."



Andrew Baker, Stockman at Duchy Home Farm.

"I look after the beef cattle, do some relief milking and help with the sheep. I had used homoeopathy a bit before I did the HAWL course. Since doing the course I have started to use remedies more and, in the situations where I have used it, I can definitely see the difference. The most obvious one for me is using Caulophyllum at calving. When I found one cow, she had obviously been straining for a while, calf's nose was swollen, about 4 times normal size. It was all I could do to get my fingers around the head, let alone get in to be able to massage the vulva, she was very tight so it was really surprising how fast the Caulophyllum worked. It couldn't have been more than ten minutes from first spraying and then coming back with the calving aid when the calf came out easily, no tearing or damage to either of them and the heifer was up within ten minutes. With a head that size and the tightness, you expect some damage to the mum, she is not usually keen to get up.

We also used remedies last year at weaning, the lambs and the calves. That made a noticeable difference, they stopped bleating and bellowing in about 24 hours. Normally it goes on for days, with the calves it can be a week. This time the calves and the cows were at opposite ends of the barn and they were quiet after about 24 hours. It was noticeable from past experience that they were not stressed, they stopped worrying, stopped wandering around looking for their mothers, were not set back in weight gain. There did not seem to be the weight check that you usually get with lambs and calves."

Kim Pery with her alpacas!

"I help with the sheep and the Herefords on a biodynamic farm next door where we use homoeopathy all the time. Whenever the animals are handled, whenever they are in the crush, even shearing, everything calms down when you use it. We use remedies for all sorts of things, strains and cuts, it stops problems at weaning, they are calm, they don't look hunched up and tense.

On my own farm we have 50 alpacas, we sell a lot as fox guards now. They are sensitive creatures and they can get very stressed. When we handle them, get them in or change things, we give them Aconite and even at castration they are fine, we can just hold their heads loosely while the vet works with a local anaesthetic and they are as good as gold. Then we give them Arnica in the water and there are no problems. They sometimes get stifle injuries and we use homoeopathy for those too.

With alpacas the birth can take a long time, all the others come round too, I give them Aconite to calm them and then we do not seem to have any problems after. Conventionally everyone gives colostrum to the new crias and injects them but we have never had to do that, in ours the milk seems to come straight away, we seem to have a lot less problems, our crias are all big and healthy and fighting fit."

"The odd time obviously we have had to use conventional treatment, but the great thing with the homoeopathy is the stopping things early, nipping things in the bud. You do need to know your animals, have time to lean over the gate and look. But I think we prevent so much, you can't count how much you have prevented!! Stress can cause all sorts of problems, what have we stopped? What would have happened? Its not provable but you just know its the right thing to do."

“I use it because it works”

Asking a farmer why he uses homoeopathy can elicit a fairly dusty answer

A typical response came from conventional farmer **Tyrell Selway**, rearing heifers and beef animals in Somerset. *“I use it because it works and I would not waste time or money if it did not work. I’ve used homoeopathy for a number of years particularly for treating ringworm. We use it because nothing else is available. I have no knowledge of homoeopathy so we just use the knowledge of the local homoeopathic vet.”*

Ian Tucker, a conventional smallholder with Hereford cattle has the same experience for New Forest eye infection. *“It works, it stopped the spread.”*

Lynnie Hutchison, sheep farmer *“It works time and time again. Whilst I’m willing to try anything within reason that will benefit the flock, I’m also healthily sceptical and questioning by nature, so if it didn’t work we’d have stopped using it. We have a healthier flock and are more able to respond quickly to illness, stress and accidents if they occur. We can be proactive, pre-empting things when unavoidable triggers to disease are occurring and this means much less actual disease and difficulty to be dealt with. This is especially true at lambing time when for example the appropriate remedy can stop the shock felt by a new mother and help her milk come in and mothering to occur naturally, saving the sheep and lamb lots of stress and us heaps of work at the busiest time of the year. We can compare between homoeopathy and conventional treatments in some cases seeing how fast a disease progresses and how quickly it clears up compared to what conventional shepherds/vets would expect. An outbreak of Orf is a good example where the field conditions are poor, grass growth and stubble, thistles etc. When treated homoeopathically at the first signs usually no more signs are seen and those present clear up in a couple of days, not what our conventional friends would expect to see if treating conventionally. I think being without homoeopathy now would be like seeing a disaster unfold in slow motion and having the tools to stop it, but not being able to get there in time to do it.”*



Brenda Hall, conventional sheep farmer. *“Why do I use it? Because it works. I have someone to help with lambing and there were two things which convinced her. One was the EColi nosode, if you can pick up the lambs quickly which are just going watery, which might be, one dose of E Coli and they are alright. And the other thing was Carbo Vegis. When you struggle to get a lamb out and you can’t get it to take its first breath then you put one of those down then it really starts it off. I have used it on a collapsed ewe and she came back. I think homoeopathy is absolutely brilliant but it is only part of our management tools and we should really be treating what we have got then trying to find out why we have got it and then making sure we do not get it again”.*



Anecdotal evidence. Absolutely. But how many anecdotes add up to farm evidence?

It appears that these self same anecdotes are repeated up and down the country. This paper includes information from nearly 50 farmer-users, conventional and organic, on big estates and small family farms and the same themes appeared over and over again. The “anecdotes” are repeated every time and can be summed up as:-

They use homoeopathy to:-

- prevent and treat problems;
- save time (in attending to sick animals or difficult births) money and lives;
- avoid contamination, resistances and loss of production;

They have found it helps them

- improve their general management (in looking behind the superficial symptoms to the underlying causes);
- adhere to their own philosophy of farming and safeguard the integrity of what they offer to consumers;
- do something for their animals themselves, often when there is no conventional answer.

It gives them

- satisfaction, “a buzz”;

They have

- fewer problems,
- lose fewer animals,
- see healthier stock

They measure their success in terms of problem free production and sales.

Their income depends on having healthy animals, so, as for any farmer, success can be measured in terms of productivity, cash flow and profit, but essentially they use it

“because it works”.

Krystyna Baker, dairy farmer and qualified homoeopath. *“It keeps general health high. Since I have begun to use it lots of problems which are common on other farms no longer exist here, also it makes you pay more attention to detail, you tend to know the individual characteristics of the herd better because you observe more. There are still occasions we need conventional medicine but usually if I can’t cure it, nor can my vet. It becomes a way of life.”*

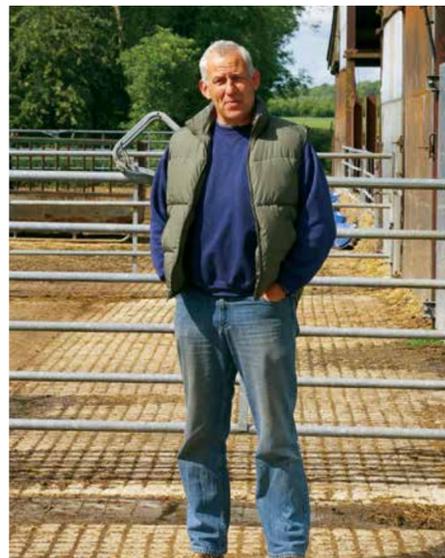
Dominic Heneghan Agriculture Programme Leader at the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, Nottingham Trent University said that he went on a course to see if something that should not be able to work actually does work, and he found that it did.

“The students are sceptical but they see me use it and occasionally they are amazed at the result. I was called by a student one day during lambing, with an urgent “I think you should come and see this” and found a ewe absolutely flat out after a very long (far too long) and rough lambing. The ewe looked dead. I gave her a squirt of the famous corpse reviver and she was up and looking after her lamb very quickly. Yes I use it, because I find it is successful, I chose the remedy as I have been taught to and use the reference books.”



John Newman, Farm manager. *“I suppose I know it works from the feedback from the staff, they ask for more remedies or come back and say “yes that worked”. You can look at costs of vets and general animal health and say we are running at much lower than you would expect for similar farms. Looking at the health issues that are raised (we keep a regular monthly record which turns into an annual record of cases of mastitis, cell count, pneumonias whatever) the real proof is that we are not having to treat things left right and centre. If you are not having to treat them then what you are doing is working and within that one of those tools is homoeopathy. It’s difficult to put your finger on. We used to have births all over the place and now we have a much more together birthing pattern and it’s happening in the day. Let’s face it it doesn’t cost the earth to use it, if it was costing £10 per cow to possibly get it to calve during the day time then you would think twice but if it costs very little and you are just putting a few drops in the water and the comparative number of assisted calvings drops, then you just think it’s worth it. I don’t think you can ever make a really objective assessment just because you are dealing with animals and so many variables.”*

It’s not about saying I can do without this and that, it needs good stockmanship and management. For the farmer it all comes down to looking at general good animal welfare and health. If you haven’t got healthy animals you are not going to have a product to sell. Homoeopathy is a tool in that management, if you only use Arnica then that is making a difference. If we were conventional I would still use it. We use it all the time at home, the fact I am still playing rugby is proof it works!”



Jonathan Ravenhill, a dairy farmer from Stroud with 130 acres and 60 milkers, had unwittingly employed a qualified homoeopath as his relief milker and was rather surprised that it did work. *“Homoeopathy; it’s been quite successful over last 2/3 years especially for mastitis control. I thought this homoeopathy was something you just sprayed on and hoped it would work. But when we went organic we had to start thinking of different ways of doing things because the withdrawal periods for antibiotics were absolutely horrific; for organic farms the withdrawal for antibiotics is double than for normal farms. So we thought we’d try the homoeopathic remedy.”*

They all seem generally better since being off antibiotics. Their immune system is a lot better, we don’t get the lameness, we don’t get the terrible mastitis cases and hopefully we’re not going to see too many TB cases either. For vet visits or putting them through the crush or onto the lorry we use Aconite. That’s very effective. We’ve done a lot of TB tests over the years and it makes a lot of difference. They’re easier to handle, they don’t get stressed out; you don’t end up with them running into the corner or falling on the concrete. And when you’ve done as many TB tests as we’ve done, you need something like that otherwise you lose animals. We’ve gone to yearly TB testing for the first time in about 5 years.”

We had Specky 2, a cow with a rumen that just blew up, very distended. Off her food, off everything for days on end. We gave her a remedy she got better after about 3 weeks. Everything started working again. I was convinced we were going to lose her, actually. She’s now back to normal which is good.”



“It’s that feeling, you have done something, you’ve either saved a life or made its life better or the quality of the cure, what ever you have done with that animal YOU have done it”.



Barry was off to market his foot became really swollen, a bull of his size is difficult to handle with the equipment we’ve got, you just hope they’ll get better. After a remedy the foot problem disappeared.

You need to know what you are doing.

Talking to about 50 farmers showed they all use homoeopathy in different ways and for different things and this mostly depended on knowledge of the subject. Several relied on a vet to supply what was necessary, others, like Jonathan Ravenhill had a qualified employee to select the remedies, but the majority had had to learn how to do it themselves. Once they had a basic understanding they found they were able to select remedies themselves and not rely on a supplier, using what might be called classical remedies, (preparations containing only one substance, diluted and succussed beyond molecular content) and bearing only the name of the “mother tincture” they are made from. Some remedies they begin to know off by heart as useful in many daily incidents, for other things they would have to do a little more thinking.

Finding an effective homoeopathic remedy for a problem means looking at the way an animal is showing its disease, selecting not for the illness but for the way that animal is “doing” the illness. In homoeopathy the remedy is for the animal not the disease. As homoeopathic vet Geoff Johnson puts it “for the beast not the bug”.

Tina Palmer, herds woman to a large dairy herd, was asked by her boss for a remedy for a calf with green scours. She asked him what else it was doing and he seemed baffled. “On my course I have just done cases of four calves with green scours” she explained “and they all needed a different remedy, you’ll have to tell me more than that, you’ve got to find the right one or it will not work”.

This need to be specific in the selection of the appropriate remedy is something that the non homoeopath finds difficult to comprehend, used as we are to the broad spectrum drugs specific to named diseases.

Often farm problems will have no conventional diagnosis or treatment. If the farmer has some basic understanding of how to select the appropriate remedy homoeopathy can offer a solution for animals which do not thrive, are poor performers, have a high cell count or are infertile and which might well have to “go down the road”. The more they knew the more they found they could do

All the farmers spoke about the satisfaction using homoeopathy gave them.

“I have saved the hassle of a sick animal, saved the cost, done something myself.”



Graham Mackay Dairyman. **“I can only say that my impression, based on over thirty years of working with livestock is that these remedies work.”**

See page 14 for full report.

Occasionally irritation at the constant denial of their reality overcomes patience completely. **David Eyles**, a conventional farmer in Dorset sent this comment.

“Our very elderly and soon-to-be-departed Jack Russell is very, very unsteady now and the other day, he got stuck in a corner in the courtyard and proceeded to panic because he couldn’t move. I found him whimpering and wheezing badly and clearly in a state of distress. I picked him up and took him into his bed in the warm and gave him Aconite 200c. Within three or four seconds of the dose he wound his breathing down to normal, stopped wheezing and visibly started to relax. It’s just so frustrating when I listen to these arrogant so and sos, with no experience or training, say that homoeopathy does not work.”



What is Homoeopathy?

It's a HUGE subject. Meaning "similar suffering" homoeopathy is based on the concept of like curing like, a principle observed by Hippocrates in the C4th BC and re-established in the C18th by the German physician and chemist, Hahnemann, who found that taking quinine when he was well produced the sweats and fevers typical of Malaria, which disappeared when he stopped. Friends and colleagues were persuaded to try the effect of different substances, all symptoms were recorded, collated and collected to create "remedy pictures" written up in books still used by homoeopaths to match the "like" of the patient's symptoms to the "like" of the remedy. The homoeopathic approach was used with great success on the scourges of the day like Scarlet Fever which led to criticism of it being available only to the rich and the establishment of charitable hospitals.

What is Farm Homoeopathy?

While there is some information published about the homoeopathic treatment of companion animals very little is published or even written about farm animal homoeopathy today but its use goes back to the time of Hahnemann and discussions on the prevention of Cattle Plague. In fact, until the development of modern pharmaceuticals, homoeopathy was, for many vets (and presumably farmers too) a normal part of animal practice. Historian Frances Truherz has 132 books in English, German and French all on animal homoeopathy.

Post war agricultural policies world wide concentrated on cheap food, creating large and intensive farms where pharmaceuticals were needed to contain the increased disease and to boost production. Against this intensification the Organic Movement, led by farmers like Eve Balfour and philosophers like Schumacher began to suggest there was another way so that by the early 80's standards had been agreed for organic production with its focus on the causes of health rather than of disease, a requirement to avoid chemical medicines and an emphasis on

Medicines of the day were often deadly poisons, so to reduce the chances of damage to the patient Hahnemann began to increase the dilutions. To do this with insoluble minerals like mercury the method was to pound, in pestle and mortar, before "dissolving" and shaking hard to keep the material in solution. It became obvious that the greater the dilution, together with the shaking called succussion, the greater seemed to be the effect on the patient. Thus to the concept of "like cures like" was added the concept of the "minimum dose", the ultra high dilutions, today rather inaccurately known as "homoeopathic", which so confound modern molecular science. But homoeopathy is a system, not a product, and has its own philosophy and practice very different from that of modern main stream medicine. The remedy picture must match the patient's symptom picture and if it does not it will not be effective. While a product may be ultra dilute unless it is used homoeopathically it will be no more effective than an antibiotic on a virus.

the use of alternatives such as homoeopathy. Research in the 90's showed that organic farmers turned to Homoeopathy as a medicine of first resort, few of them with any understanding of this system and even fewer with veterinary support.

Most Homoeopathic pharmacies do not specifically supply the farming community and so keep no records. Other suppliers tell us they have hundreds of farmer clients but are not able to offer much data either on numbers or outcomes. Tony Pinkus of Ainsworths pharmacy and Phil Hansford wrote a book about the treatment of the dairy herd and included some statistics. The British Homoeopathic Veterinary Association has about 50 members but their list makes no distinction between farm, equine or small animal practice. Because of this lack of support farmers generally have to make their own decisions.

Remedies are not species specific. They are chosen for the signs and symptoms, not the breed. Dogs, cats, pigs, horses, sheep, cows, llamas, goats, chickens, rabbits can all be treated.

“It is difficult to find support.”

The difficulty of finding qualified support from someone informed and interested in cutting down conventional medicines is common to most farmers.

The Lowe report (2009) sees the farm veterinary practice as a business needing to sell itself to the farmer client, to offer the things he or she wants, but their survey shows no “alternative” services offered by any farm practice. Professor Lowe suggests that the farmers do not express their needs clearly. The experience of HAWL, teaching nearly 500 farmers, is that they do express their needs very clearly, but official bodies are not listening. Respondents in 2000, to a British Cattle Veterinary Association survey of 600 dairy clients asked for “more homoeopathy” but there is no indication that this has been supplied. The Animal Health Trust refused to look into farm homoeopathy, the BVA does not recognise it, the farm vets see it as not evidence based and are very reluctant even to discuss it. The subject, taking four years of study, is (unsurprisingly) not covered in veterinary training and a farm vet has little time or incentive to learn it later. In 2002, during discussions on who might sell drugs (the vet or the pharmacy) the BVA pointed out that 70% of the veterinary income came from the sale of pharmaceutical (Vet Record Vol 5 Jan 29, 2000). The farmer is left to struggle unsupported.

A 2004 study asked five midlands sheep farmers using homoeopathy, about their own experience. The author was suprised to find that disappointment with the allopathic vets was a big issue “ if an animal did not respond to allopathic treatment or presented a challenge in terms of time and effort then it was found that allopathic vets tended to discount the animal in question.....they feel dissatisfied with the service offered by conventional veterinary surgeons, who often do not have the answer to the health problems they are presented with.”



everyone was laughing at organic, today it's changed enormously. I saw a report recently talking about sustainable farming and all the farm cases cited were organic. It's a big shift in fifteen years but it is still not easy for the livestock farmer who wants to reduce chemical inputs. Everyone knows the dangers of soil, water and food chain contamination, of drug resistance and environmental damage but the Lowe report last year found no veterinary practices offering alternative services. I am not sure that is actually accurate but on the whole it is still difficult for the farmer to find what in America is called a "health care professional" who can understand their aims and know how to help them. It's all still seen in terms of specific named disease prevention and getting away from that needs a big shift. The HAWL course really concentrates on health using homoeopathy as a tool in the overall management strategy and certainly not as a substitute for either good management or conventional medicines. The farmer's aim is to keep the animals healthy and feedback from our students tells us taking our course has helped them to achieve this.

To date we have taught nearly 500 farmers. We give them an intensive course. They work hard, this is not a nice farm visit to discuss other people's management, it's a very structured course in what is essentially a new language of health care. As one of our farmer students said: "homoeopathy is so much more than the remedies." There are basic principles to be understood and specific methods to be applied in finding the right remedy for the problem. We aim to give the farmer the tools to make his or her own decisions, to think things out for themselves, to be empowered. To have a step between noticing something is wrong and having to call in the vet. It's a good feeling to know that what you have done for your animals has really helped them. Farmers make very good homoeopaths and HAWL teachers, all vets and homoeopaths, used to teaching ordinary humans, are struck by how

fast HAWL students all progress. This is because homoeopathy relies on careful observation, the stock in trade of a good farmer. Spotting the animal that's off colour is essentially the farmer's job anyway isn't it, all part of good husbandry. The knowing what to do – that's the homoeopathy bit. Part of our message is "if you don't know what you're doing, don't do it." As far as we can find out, no-one else has asked farmers about how they use homoeopathy, their perception of outcome or their satisfaction with its use. Homoeopathy is dismissed as unproven and therefore ineffective, but the feedback from our students contradicts this. They use it and they see it as effective and the greater their understanding of the system the greater their success. So, we decided we need to make a start, simply to collect the farmers' stories, get them all together and begin to see what conclusions we can draw. To date we have talked to 50 farmers.

We run HAWL for several reasons and one is that the untutored use of homoeopathy on the farm brings the whole subject into disrepute. The misunderstandings are legion and the farmer with no basic knowledge can find him or herself buying expensive and inappropriate preparations. It's all to do with there being no support. How can the farmer fulfil government, environment, buyer and consumer expectations of reduced chemical inputs, or avoid contamination and resistances if there is no one there to help? HAWL set out to fill that gap, not to encourage the use of homoeopathy but to say that if you are going to use it, it is a fantastic tool, but please do not play around with it. Don't use it to cover your poor management, don't pretend it is a silver bullet to treat the intransigent results of intensive production or use it just when conventional medicines fail. Use it within the whole system to improve health and use it properly or not at all."

What do we accurately call homoeopathy when it's used by a farmer?

Is it veterinary? The dictionary definition of veterinary is the treatment of disease in animals. But farmers know any animal can be "not quite right" long before it is actually ill and way before there is a diagnosable condition. I floated the thought within my family, "of course it's veterinary, that's a term everyone understands means animal" said my son. "OK", I said "And what do you call it when a mother selects a remedy for a cranky baby, is that medical homoeopathy?"

"That's just good management, that's doing her job properly" said my daughter in law. So is the farmer, selecting a remedy for the dairy cow because she is bellowing for her calf (taken away yesterday) and refusing to let her milk down practising veterinary homoeopathy, or just doing the job properly? I raise the point because terminology seems to be affecting the perception of when and how homoeopathy can be used on the farm, and this in turn affects not only the farmer and the animals but also you and me, the consumer.

It is a misconception general within farming that homoeopathy is a resort for disease rather than a tool for health improvement. Realistically any farmer prefers to avoid disease, a sick animal is not a profitable one, but very few have had the opportunity to learn how homoeopathy can help.

May the farmer use it?

The 1966 Veterinary Surgeons Act limits the diagnosis and treatment of animals to vets and owners. General understanding is that the farmer and anyone in his employ is legally allowed to diagnose and treat, except for reward. In an emergency anyone can do anything.

To confirm the situation a memorandum was submitted by the Animal Health Distributors Association Ltd. to the House Of Commons Sixth Session 2007-8 on the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. (Page Ev 107 para 1 of the report).

“Under the definition of “veterinary surgery” it is not the exclusive right of the veterinary surgeons to make a diagnosis on animals, under the existing act farmers are permitted to perform a diagnosis on their animals, this needs to remain in place”. The RCVS confirms that, essentially, this is accurate.

And of course it is ultimately the farmer's legal responsibility to ensure the welfare of his or her own animals and the license to keep farm animals can be withdrawn if this is not done. What and how they treat is then up to them.

There is, for the vet, a requirement to use a drug licensed for animals first rather than any cheaper generic and only after that those licensed for humans, an issue the farm vets can find difficult as the former will often be more expensive.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act defines this as a cascade.

"Animals need medicines to help prevent disease and to help treat them if they do fall ill. All species deserve the benefit of medicinal products which have been specifically developed and authorised for their treatment. The cascade ensures this happens wherever possible, but also gives flexibility for veterinary surgeons to use their clinical judgement to prescribe a medicine where no veterinary authorised medicine exists".

Somewhere into the middle of this falls the professional judgement of the vet, and presumably also the farmer, to do whatever is necessary to save life. (Not to mention the added conundrum of deciding, in the case of the farm animal, if and when taking life - culling - is actually the best welfare). The classical single named remedies, used, without any recorded ill effect, on the farm for over two centuries making no claims of efficacy have certainly not been specifically trialled for farm animal use but then neither have many commonly used medicines. However, presumably, the farmer may also exercise his or her "clinical judgement" and ensure their own animals get the treatment they, the owners, feel is best.

EU Regulations of 2002 brought homoeopathic remedies into the category of medicines, and the definition of a medicine is very wide.

Regulation 2 (1) of The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2009 define a Veterinary Medicinal Product as follows:

- a) Any substance or combination of substances presented as having properties for treating or preventing disease in animals; or
- b) Any substance or combination of substances that may be used in, or administered to, animals with a view either to restoring, correcting or modifying physiological functions by exerting a pharmacological, immunological or metabolic action or to making a medical diagnosis.

In UK it is often suggested that using homoeopathy compromises "good welfare", itself a debatable term, but a Norwegian PhD study of farmers using homoeopathy found they used it in spite of veterinary antagonism, did so "because it worked", gained great satisfaction from being able to help their animals themselves and were, if anything, more aware of when it was necessary to call in a vet.

If homoeopathy is seen as a substitute for conventional medicines then its use is very limited and most farmers would certainly have to rely on a vet to help them. But from these interviews, a picture begins to emerge of homoeopathy as a part of management, of a way of avoiding problems altogether, of using the homoeopathic thought process to improve stockmanship and avoid the need for conventional medications.

Also emerging is a pattern, one group of those interviewed relied on the vet, or the supplier to decide what they needed and these farmers tended to use it only when problems occurred.. The other group had made efforts to learn more about the subject and how to select remedies for themselves, by reading books or attending classes. These farmers found that the more they learnt, the more they integrated the homoeopathic thought process, as well as the remedies, into their daily management which not only increased their confidence in what they were doing but also, in many cases, led to management changes. Ultimately they found they could use less and less conventional medicine because their animals were simply healthier, an observation quantifiable within farming terms.

From an environmental and consumer point of view these are invaluable results. We completely miss the point if we look on homoeopathy as something the farmer should use for his own good. Poor use of homoeopathy on the farm will lead to disrepute and the less it is used the more dependent will be the producers of our food on chemical drugs, wormers, antibiotics, anti-inflammatories etc., all going not only into our food but also into our soils and our water supplies. It is in everyone's interest to encourage and support farmers who make these efforts to master a complex subject, largely without much support.

So, back to my original point, is it accurate to call it all veterinary homoeopathy? I suspect that most of the farmers would agree with my daughter in law and say actually it's simply good management. Let's just call it agricultural or farm homoeopathy, and work to get it better understood.

which in itself raises interesting questions about where the line is between good nutrition, supplements and medicine.

Despite the fact that science says there is nothing but water and sugar in the preparations called "homoeopathic" and the classical single named remedies mostly used on UK farms are labeled only for content, not effect or application, 2002 regulations from the EU, (in the interest of free trade) made all medicines given to food producing animals prescription only. (POM). EU Regs must be implemented but each member country must define exactly how. In UK the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) decided, after much discussion and untangling of misconceptions, to put homoeopathic remedies into the category of POM which farmers may buy from any supplier and use provided they are listed in and produced according to the EU Pharmacopoea by a licensed pharmacy.

During all this debate many farmers felt that for a remedy, legally bought from chemists (and which they used for themselves and their children) to become available for their animals only on prescription from their non homoeopathic vet was very confusing.

So the farmer may use the remedies at his or her own discretion but, unless he buys from a vet, he must be sure they are produced by a registered homoeopathic pharmacy. The pharmacies produce remedies in the methodologies laid down so that all remedies contain what they say they do, and are safe. They do not say what they are for, which is where contention starts. Where a product makes a claim of efficacy (says what disease it treats), unless it has been through the proper trials to prove this, it is failing to comply with both the law of the land and the laws of homoeopathy.

It takes a strong minded farmer to risk the antagonism of the farm vet. Some go as far as cross questioning the local practices to find out how much sympathy can be expected, and choose accordingly. There is no NHS for the farm animal and few are insured, the farmer pays the piper but is not always able to call the tune.

This lack of informed support is not limited to UK, it was also reported in USA where Organic farmers stated very clearly that their conventional health care professionals were not able to support them in their efforts to reduce chemical inputs. As a result NOFA received a grant of \$150,000 to use on education of the “health care professionals”. But while UK government policy speaks of sustainability and reduction of chemicals, any form of alternative therapy is seen as unproven, not evidence based and therefore unacceptable, not included in the veterinary or agricultural teaching courses, discounted by the majority of vets, and even publicly ridiculed as voodoo. Farmers in UK would all value veterinary input but the present climate would suggest this is very unlikely and a grant here would be better spent supporting the farmers own training.

Remedies Farmers Use

It is often assumed that where farm homoeopathy is used it is only for seriously sick animals (probably because Organic Standards request that when an animal is ill farmers avoid conventional synthetic chemical medicines and use alternatives, like homoeopathy). In fact most of the farmers use homoeopathy to avoid rather than treat problems, pointing out that sick animals cost them time and money. Depending on the problem they might ask their vet or a supplier to decide for them but most select the remedy themselves, using single classical remedies which make no disease curing claims. For this the farmers use a homoeopathic thought process and report success. Homoeopathy is often referred to as a pseudo science. Nobel laureate Professor Montagnier sees this as “an intellectual terror from people who do not understand it. It’s not quackery, it’s a real phenomena which deserves investigation”.

Very little research is published about farm homoeopathy. What little research there is has been geared more to investigating the efficacy of a particular product than seeing what works for the farmer, but the conflicting need of showing a product works as opposed to getting or keeping the animals healthy makes any valid recording very difficult. The farmers have little interest in proving to others that homoeopathy works, they simply get on with making it do so and they use it to avoid problems generally; to prevent problems specifically, (like difficult births or named diseases); to treat for incidents like shock, fear, injury, for disease, for the intransigent problems of infertility and simply when an animal is “not quite right”. To do this they may use single named remedies, combinations of remedies and also what are loosely and often inaccurately called “nosodes”.

Nosodes

This is probably the area of most confusion. Most farmers come to homoeopathy via the “nosode”. To them a nosode is so called because of what it **does**, prevent a specific problem (usually a disease). To the trained homoeopath a nosode is so called because of what it **is**, a remedy made from diseased tissue. Farm nosodes are made up by vets or pharmacies, often to farmer demand, and the content will vary according to their skill, knowledge and experience. Disease prevention by nosode is a hugely debated subject not least because using a disease name opens up all sorts of commercial implications of “efficacy”. “Nosode” trials have mostly concentrated on dairy mastitis and show little effect. On the other hand, farmers who use these preparations tell us that for problems like Orf and New Forest Eye the farm “nosode” is remarkable in its effectiveness, for the more complex diseases of production, like mastitis, (for which there is no conventional prophylaxis) results are more varied, but a large number use them and swear by them. 96 in a DEFRA study. A study at Wangeningen University in Germany showed an ‘E-Coli’ nosode to be effective in reducing scours in piglets.



A DEFRA study, which found the mastitis nosode to have no noticeable effect, made the point that nosodes are not particularly cheap and so one might assume that farmers would use them only if they really found benefit, but, equally, the fear of disease is very great making it difficult to assess what the risk or benefit really is without expert help. With mastitis, as with most problems, there are many other issues which need to be addressed to avoid the illness, which is of course really the basis of good farming be it conventional or organic.

John Ravenhill

We had a problem with ringworm and we used a nosode. We graze cattle on the common, they seem to pick it up on the common. It literally just disappeared within weeks, ‘never known it disappear so quickly before.

Lynn Hutchison We had a case of sudden lamb mortality which I thought was (and proved to be) Pulpy Kidney. The vet said we must vaccinate the whole herd, he said that it was a welfare issue, and that we would be negligent not to vaccinate. These are serious suggestions. I felt that the implications were complex, bringing in all ewes and lambs would stress them. As it could not be used on lambs under 4 weeks, they would need to come in twice. Immunity takes 6 weeks, so there would be losses during that time etc. No one could answer questions about the efficacy of the vaccination, the % that would still die anyway. I rang Trevor Adams MRCVS for advice and support, and decided to use the nosode immediately. There were no more fatalities.

Conventional farmer Brenda Hall,

My sheep had conjunctivitis and my vet said he could do nothing for them and they would have to live with it. We had a farm nosode made up specially for them and they all recovered. Lambing 2000 conventional sheep in Dorset, in and outside, I have found that pre-dosing with Pasturella nosode and one or two other homoeopathic remedies seemed to be about as effective as the vaccine – i.e. that losses were about the same with homoeopathy as with Pasturella vaccine.



A simple explanation of remedies.

Homoeopathic remedies must be prepared by a registered pharmacy according to current regulations to conform to safety and quality. The production process involves a controlled sequential process of dilution and a specific shaking process called succussion.

Remedies are labelled according to remedy name and potency. When diluted to the 12c potency the remedy will be so dilute as to have no molecules of the original substance left.

Single remedies

Arnica (from the plant) 30c (diluted and succussed to 100 to the power of 30).

Belladonna (from the plant) 1M (diluted and succussed 100 to the power of 1000).

Mercury (from the mineral) 6x (diluted and succussed to 10 to the power of 6)

Complexes are available where the remedies have been found to work well together.

BBU (Bryonia Belladonna and Urtica Urens).

Nosodes.

Single remedies made from disease material and used in the 30c or 200c potency (diluted and succussed way beyond any possibility of anything material being there.)

Homoeopathic remedies come in liquids or pills, spray or dropper bottles, large or small containers and are produced by registered pharmacies.

The Single remedies used by most of the farmers, (animal, vegetable or mineral), are named only for content, not effect and require some knowledge of homoeopathy to use effectively, some skill to decide which remedy is needed when treating an animal, or a human. Knowing how to do this is important as a remedy is not “homoeopathic” until it is matched to the signs the animal is showing. “Like cures like.”

If homoeopathy is used as medicine for deep pathologies then, in the hands of the untrained person, its use can be seen as very irresponsible, but used as an additional management tool, with understanding, many would argue it offers better care and a way of avoiding the pathologies and problems altogether.

Some published research suggests that in fact farmers who do use homoeopathy are more aware than ever of their animals and when the vet’s expertise is really needed. A PhD by Norwegian vet Lisbeth Hektoen states that farmer users seemed more aware of the welfare of their animals and when to call the vet, and her study on antibiotic reduction says:-

“The results indicate that the implementation of homoeopathy in the herd health management, and the ensuing decreased use of antibacterial drugs, do not have a negative impact on health and production of any practical significance. As far as these results can be used as welfare parameters, it is indicated that the utilisation of homoeopathy does not influence animal welfare adversely”

In a DEFRA study of 250 dairy farmers looked at mastitis prevention conventional vet Andy Butterworth made the same observation.

“The experience of the authors during this study was that many organic dairy farmers had a very intelligent and practical approach to mastitis management, using complementary therapies where they saw them to be appropriate, but not withholding the use of stripping, udder liniments, removal of high cell count animals from the herd, and targeted use of antibiotics when the health and welfare of their animals demanded their use”.

A project in Holland, designed to help farmers whose calves were dying (from scours) gave each farmer a few remedies and instruction on the indications for use. The farmers found the remedies effective, one simply said he had tried everything else, new housing and feeding etc and the calves kept dying, he used the remedies and they stopped dying. Against the gold standard of research methodology this study was a failure. From the gold standard of farming, the farmer’s own ability to act and the effect on profit margin, it was a success.

On the farm economics dictate and the conventional answer is often that the animal will have to get over it or be culled. It is certainly very rare for a vet to be called out to a sheep, they are simply not valuable enough to make it financially sensible and even for the more valuable larger animals the drugs are limited, treatments may be too expensive to justify or impractical for the farm and it is generally accepted (and experienced by the farmer) that resistances and consequent reduction of effectiveness, in the farm animal as well as the human are increasing.

Farmers know a large percentage of sick animals will get better on their own, the conundrum is which ones, will they suffer and will it reduce economic viability? The official line of the RCVS (regulating the vets), BVA (representing the vets) and NOAH (representing the veterinary pharmaceutical industry), would seem to be that the use of an antibiotic is “good welfare” but this disregards the bigger picture, the reports about antimicrobial resistances and the emergence of MRSA in farm animals. Whose welfare is involved in these decisions and assumptions? The animal’s, the farmer’s, the vet’s, the supplier’s, the consumer’s? While it might be preferred and even regulated that antimicrobials are used only when prescribed by a vet, the reality of farming and low commodity prices mean that many farmers cannot afford vet fees unless the problem is serious, so they keep a few antibiotics on the farm “in case” and use them rather than risk a call out fee. Lab tests are not a first resort so clinical symptoms are the indication of progress or deterioration whether for conventional or homoeopathic treatment. One HAWL farmer was brave enough to put this on paper. “I no longer keep a bottle of antibiotics on the farm to start treatment myself (a widespread practice not quite to the letter of the law), I now leave it for the vet to prescribe, therefore homoeopathy helps me to adhere to the current regulations on antibiotic use”.

And of course there is the question of immunities, resistances and simple consumer preference.

“I can take early action”

The trump card always offered by the sceptic is the danger that sick animals will not get ‘properly’ treated. They worry that the animal will be allowed to suffer because a serious illness has not been diagnosed nor a conventionally recommended treatment given. Farmer homoeopathy users see it differently and hotly contest accusations that homoeopathic treatment may compromise the animals’ welfare.

Liz Best, mixed farmer and winner of several clean milk awards:-

“I feel that the greatest advantage of using it is that you can get straight in and treat the animal for the slightest sign of ‘un-health’ instead of the conventional way of waiting for the illness to develop, therefore it is more humane.”

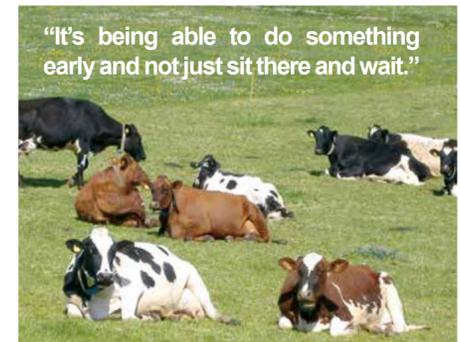
John Newman farm manager

It’s this being able to do something early and not just sit there and wait. I think that’s where it fits so well with organic farming because you have said ‘right, I want to take control, I want to have more input about what I am doing.’ Learning the homoeopathic methods, for a good stockman, is probably just confirming how they look at the animals anyway but it gives them a few more hooks, helps them to focus a bit more, bringing out some of the things they noticed unconsciously or subconsciously already. You look more carefully, you start looking at the ‘why is this happening’, and it’s that feeling, you have done something, you’ve either saved a life or made its life better or the quality of the cure, whatever you have done with that animal YOU have done it.

David Wilson

“If someone understands the bigger picture of the background we have of resistance in human medicine the over use of antibiotics creating the resistances (and I suspect there are other problems, negative side effects which are not fully understood yet), they can give the homoeopathy with a much clearer conscience. I think most people actually don’t have a conscience about using antibiotics, but the fact of the matter is we are running out of antibiotics for when they are really needed. Frightening statistic. 70% of all antibiotics used in America, all use, human and animal, are used on healthy animals. If I was farming conventionally I would definitely go on using homoeopathy, you are supporting the bodies mechanism of self healing without upsetting any of the delicate balances. To the farm the benefits are lower costs, no residues in the animal, and hopefully an animal which returns to health quicker, and is not going to suffer from had a body full of antibiotics.”

Routine use of antibiotics is officially discouraged in UK, to be used only when prescribed by a vet. Routine use of antimicrobials as growth promoters is banned in UK but in 2007 40% of all antimicrobials sold in UK were for food producing animals. Before the ban 0.08kgs. of antimicrobials were sold per tonne of liveweight of animals slaughtered, after the ban this dropped to 0.06 kgs. The website of the National Office of Animal Health, representing the animal medicine industry website explains. “NOAH feels the use of in-feed medication is still the most widely used and has fewer management problems than other systems. In the presence of disease, or where disease is suspected, or based on previous experience the disease is imminent, the veterinary surgeon supplies a prescription to the feedstuff manufacturer and the appropriate medication can be supplied during the manufacture of a special batch of treated feed.”



“It’s being able to do something early and not just sit there and wait.”

Claims that using homoeopathy can compromise the animals welfare are not substantiated and farmers vary in what they use and when they use it. Some farmers prefer to avoid mainstream medicines and, with the help of homoeopathy, have not used antimicrobials for many years, others try homoeopathy and find it helps for some things and not others. Many dairy farmers struggle with mastitis but however “resolutely organic” will use antibiotics when they need to, others use only homoeopathic remedies and have no problem getting their cows better. Learning how to treat the various pathologies depends very much on the skill of the person actually handling the animals on a day to day basis. Essentially it is up to the farmer (indeed his legal responsibility) to decide in what way he or she treats an animal and the decision is based on their professional assessment, their experience, their knowledge and their know how. That’s what they are good at, decision making, their livelihoods depend on it.

Mary Hinton Smallholder

“I am a smallholder with a small flock of sheep, hens and weaner pigs. I hold the well being of my animals very highly and use homoeopathic remedies as well as the help of my vets to ensure I do the very best for my stock. I have also paid to go on a course to improve my understanding of the principals of Homoeopathy as I use it as a means to boost the well being of my animals and so prevent illness in my stock.”



What do farmers use it for?

Farmers who have studied how to use homoeopathy effectively use it for all sorts of situations and events which obviously varied from farm to farm, variables are the essence of farming. The situations and the problems varied as much as the outcomes, success increased with usage and knowledge but no one said it did not work.

Richard Brown

The thing I have noticed most is the stress, at TB testing or routine vet visit we put a remedy in the water before we are going to do something which is going to upset them and the vet says the animals are so much calmer. We use Arnica if an animal's had a bruise or a bang, it's in reach in the parlour, we use it all the time, and it's just routine. I am simply trying to keep them well. We are doing everything we can to stop things going wrong and 99.9 percent of the time we have succeeded. It's so long since I didn't use it I have no idea what would happen if I stopped. If I was a conventional farmer I would go on using it. I still haven't really had much success with mastitis.

John Bale, farm manager.

I use homoeopathy in all sorts of ways, as a preventive, to firefight, for illness, to relieve pain and I select the right remedy myself and ask for help from suppliers. Mastitis is a good example; I hardly ever use antibiotics on mastitis. If we get 3 cases a month then I am doing badly, cell count is around 250. We have not used dry cow therapy in 20 years. Our dry cow mastitis is less than 1% so it saves money using homoeopathy plus careful attention to detail and good stockmanship, that's all just part of the ammunition of good farming. Don't make life harder for yourself for the sake of saving a minute. It's like checking the gate is closed, if you forget it takes an hour to round up escaped animals. You don't want the problems of a sick animal, it's so much more sensible to work with Mother Nature and make things better yourself.

Christine Gosling.

I am very confident it works because I have watched chronically ill cows recover back to really good health. I have seen mastitis improve or even vanish in 12-36 hours. I have seen the cell count reduce and mastitis incidence decline, and I have watched calves not feeding well or with scours recover very quickly.

Meg Thorpe

"We use Aconite and Arnica for things like dehorning and stressful things like that. On the whole we do not have many problems with the animals so we only use it in a small way. Like at calving, using Caulophyllum definitely helps, it's pretty jolly effective, but you need to know your animals and what you are doing. It seems to relax everything, they calve more easily, more rapidly. If I have a cow which is just sort of hanging on and you know it's due and she is from a family which hang on, I give her a dose and she will generally calve within a few days. And if I have a cow calving and not getting on with it or giving up then I give a few sprays on her nose and it is really effective, it speeds it up. And after all it's simply going to work or it's not and it costs so little. If you call a vet he will not necessarily know what the problem is but you can soon spend £50-60.

Susan Lacroix, sheep farmer.

We use it at castration, disbudding, for foot problems like "scald", for good bone development in young stock, at weaning, to help fertility, in males and females, at birth (it seems to help the uterus in labour), on the new born generally."



Liz Best

I use it for all problems. Mastitis, cleansings, "silage eye", orf, calving, nowadays we use remedies for all stressful situations:- Calf separation, TB testing, spring turn out, beginning of illness, veterinary procedures - to name but a few.

Cathy Swingland

At lambing for instance I keep three or four remedies in sprayers ready, ones I know I will need. Problems get sorted out, would it have happened anyway? Who knows, it's just something we use and I have every reason to think it is useful.

John Nattle

I use homoeopathy a lot it really works for some things, though I still struggle with mastitis. I have a fair success with acutes if I catch it early, I do use conventional if I need to. Fertility, calving, it's a great help. We lose very few calves at a little, you've got happier healthier animals right through the herd.

All the farmers mention using homoeopathic remedies to help reduce "stress" and they refer to times like TB testing, routine vet procedures, foot trimming, spring turn out, weaning, separation, transportation, falls and bruising or physical effort like birth, all the normal routines of the farming year. These situations will involve fear (of the noise, of confinement, of being handled by humans), or sadness (losing offspring or companions) or physical exhaustion and many of them involve some type of pain.

That classic farming phrase "that animal's not quite right", says it all. The farmer can see there is something wrong, something is brewing, but, conventionally, usually has to wait and see. With homoeopathy, as John Newman explained, there is something in between. It is possible to take early, evasive or pre-emptive action, to avoid trouble altogether or reduce the obvious distress which farmers know can result in some other problem.

The film star COW



Even film stars have nerves, which Buckinghamshire farmer Virginia Deradour was able to calm, using homoeopathy! Her film star cow made her debut on the television in the BBC series Cranford and this was her owner's report after all the fuss died down.

"My old Guernsey played the part of Bessie in the Cranford Chronicles set in the 1850s. Disaster strikes when she escapes from her field and falls in a lime pit. The lime burns her hair away and consequently it is feared she will have to be destroyed unless her owner makes her some clothes, which of course she does. A beautiful outfit of cow couture was assembled by the wardrobe department, with very few orifices showing, which of course could spell disaster for most bovines, but not a cow on homoeopathy! The lime pit scene was Lilly's chance to show star quality, and she did not let me down. The scene was filmed in a working chalk quarry, on a

bit of a precipice. The pit was constantly refilled with water, which was above welly depth as my soggy socks proved. She, however, was not perturbed by the hock deep water or the camera, lighting, sound and general hubbub of a film crew. The actresses were all very concerned for her welfare, but I told them as long as she was chewing the cud she was relaxed. She took it all in her stride and is waiting for an Oscar nomination and a walk down a red carpet!"



What farmers use homoeopathy for varies, and so does competence and success. Beginning to try using homoeopathy on animals suffering from the complex diseases of production without support is foolish. However, for many dairy farmers it is the intransigent problem of mastitis, high cell count and infertility that first brings them, to trying homoeopathy often in desperation after antibiotics have failed. National averages show a culling rate of 18-35%. Taking 25% as an easy average, this means that a quarter of the herd is slaughtered every year (mostly for mastitis, lameness and infertility) meaning most cows are used for only a couple of lactations and may not reach their sixth birthday. This for an animal with a natural lifespan of over twenty. Mastitis is accepted as a "production disease" and seen much less in out door suckler herds. Of course antibiotics work (though not always), but as many farmers pointed out, it can feel like a failure of their own management when they use them. Milk cannot be sold and experience tells them it will be a long haul and may not work anyway. Equally mastitis can kill, so using homoeopathic remedies is inadvisable for the inexperienced. Many farmers reported that they either do not try or have little success but several do, sometimes when antibiotics have failed, and some as a first choice.



Chris Gosling, in charge of their family farm Guernsey herd, wrote up this case because, as she says, this was the first time she really began to understand the process.

I keep detailed records, it helps enormously to be able to look back, compare cases, see what animals responded to and work out why and why not.

Day 1. A.M. Back left ¼ red, hot, <light touch, > firm touch, < movement, milk white + white flecks. By the water trough - I had to get her in, last cow. Small drinks of water, looking miserable, fur ruffled, slightly warm, also ears. Eyes dull, nose dry. Weather: cold winds, warm sun, cold nights. Bryonia 200c given. 1 dose.

P.M. ¼ now really hot and red (Belladonna?). Still < touch, > firm touch, no kicking, slight raised of leg after light touch. Milk thin, yellow, no clots. Diarrhoea - v loose, greenish, smelly (also Belladonna) < out at grass. Because of her behaviour - still Bryonia,.

Rx Bryonia 200c 1 dose.

After milking - looking better, munching straw on bedding.

Day 2. A.M.

Some hardness, few clots, stringy white, (relief milker). I checked her in the field- lying on affect 1/4. Still slightly red, some hardness in front part of 1/4. Chewing cud, moved with others to next field. Seems fine in herself.

No treatment.

P.M. Milk watery and grey. Cow looking weaker.

Bryonia 1 dose.

Day 3 A.M. Better in self. Milk still watery but white.

P.M Milk normal and so is she.

4 Days later. Tips of teats very sore and swollen and hot. 1 Dose Bryonia 200c. and all is well again, including C.M.T. (cell count OK).

Previously I would have chased the symptoms of the mastitis- changing milk consistency and colours and changed remedies accordingly. This time I treated "the patient behind the symptoms" - success!!

I was amazed at how quickly she recovered and, once the remedy had been given, she didn't seem distressed by the mastitis. It was scary at the time for me (especially when the grey, watery EColi looking milk came!) but I am so glad I, bravely, persevered! I have learnt a lot, and the cow will be healthier than ever!

NB in homoeopathic speak < means worse, > means better

CMT - California Milk Test

Henry Bagenal, a dairy farmer and founder member of OMSCo used homoeopathy long before the HAWL course began and had to find out for himself what was effective

The major health problems we had on the farm were:

- 1) A very nasty staph aureus that would flare up within 12 hrs, giving a very high temperature, A hard hot quarter, resulting in a very ill cow. Conventional therapy of antibiotics and anti inflammatories was seldom effective, resulting in lost quarters, greatly reduced yields and loss of fertility
- 2) Withheld afterbirth after assisting cows calving resulting in late cleansing usually affecting fertility.

My real breakthrough came with treating the mastitis. I discovered, by trial and error, that a combination of Phytolacca 1M and Belladonna 1M given every few hours could stop the mastitis in its tracks. As with all treatments catching it early always helped. I ended up being able to cure the mastitis within 2 days. The quarter would usually be down and be supple within the first day. Milk would start to come back during the second day. Usually the cow would return to full milk production but even if milk yield was lowered, the following lactation would be back to normal.

Whenever I had to assist a cow calving, she would be given a couple of treatments of Caulophyllum 1m, 10 to 15 minutes apart. As soon as the calf was born, the cow would receive a further two treatments of Caluophyllum, 10 to 15 minutes apart. This always ensured that the cow cleansed normally.

These two treatments I always view as conclusive proof that homoeopathy works, but they are anecdotal. How do you design a double blind trial when each farm and each case is individual? Belladonna and Phylolacca were seldom so successful on other farms. You could argue that the extra nursing the cow received was the difference. I was not about to start comparing this homoeopathy treatment with antibiotic and anti- inflammatories, as I knew they didn't work. My advice to farmers is to keep trying with homoeopathy, it is labour intensive but the upside is that when it works it's like a miracle!

Editor's note. This combination was found to be successful both in an Indian trial (set up to see if homoeopathic treatment was cheaper, which they found it was, but also that it was more effective) and one in Cambridge which gave a combination including Belladonna and then Phytolacca.

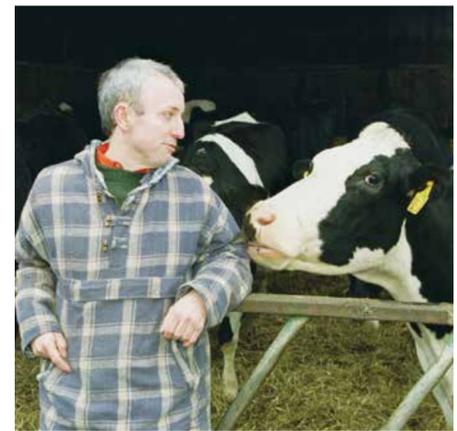
The argument against homoeopathy is that it is not evidence based.

The mode of action of homoeopathy does defy the understanding of molecular science, but it was not until the 1970's that science began to understand the action of opiates, imagine a world refusing to license pain killers based on opiates because its action was not understood? There are plenty of things a farmer has to use which are certainly not evidence based.

There is very little published information about how farmers use homoeopathy, probably because it is to nobody's commercial advantage to find out. Farmers, already drowning in paper work, lack time and incentive to collect it and homoeopathic farm vets are nearly an extinct species. Research papers looking at farm homoeopathy, usually conclude that little is known and more work needs to be done. Many report no effect and the consensus is that homoeopathy has no evidence to support its use and therefore should not be used. The farmers' stories are discounted. Whose needs are we looking to satisfy? Those of the farmer or the scientist? Those of the person who sells the stuff or the person who uses it? The remedies generally used by farmers were registered for use by the European Pharmacopeia a very long time ago and their production clearly laid out, licensed for safety and quality only, not efficacy. The "nosodes" used in UK are generally made up specifically for the farmer at his or a vet's request. There is no multibillion dollar industry making enormous profits out of farm homoeopathy, and yet legislation, on the basis of lack of evidence, seems to be restricting the use of these products, sold for two hundred years without any

Oliver Dowding was a Somerset dairy farmer and a founder member of OMSCo.

"The range of illnesses that we were tackling was extensive, but the commonest problem we faced was mastitis. Unlike the conventional farm, where mastitis tends to be treated as one illness for which there is one antibiotic solution, we had to understand the varied forms of mastitis. Each form, represented by different selection of symptoms, required a different treatment and a different remedy, and sometimes a different potency of the same remedy. It was most definitely not like the relatively simple conventional option of reaching for a tube of penicillin and treating each animal the same as every other. We soon became adept at spotting which animal was suffering with which mastitis, and matching the remedy to the particular mastitis.



Phil Hansford, author of A Herdsmans Guide to Homoeopathy began to use it in the early eighties.

Frequently people who visit the farm say that Homoeopathy does not work. However, we have been using Homoeopathy on the farm since 1986 and over the years have proved it to be extremely effective. In order for it to work not only the specific remedy needs to be chosen but the mineral balance of the farm soil (especially Selenium) needs to be correct as this has a major effect on the animals' immune system.

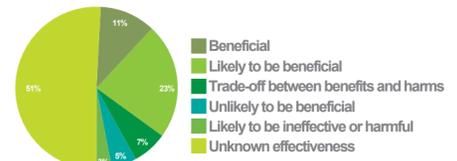
Homoeopathy is a complex subject. Initially I attended a six week evening course and then started applying it at work. We have not used an antibiotic for approximately 16 years, except an antibiotic spray when we dehorn the calves, as we found the mothers licked off the Homoeopathic remedy resulting in some cases of infection and also to treat Red Water.

A vet phoned me and asked if I could help him with his own animals. He had had two cases of a very bad E.coli mastitis which had not responded to antibiotics and so the cows had to be put down. He now had a third case with the same problem and wondered if Homoeopathy would help. I said if he was prepared to take a bit of time and care the cow should recover, which she did.

It is often difficult to get people to understand that you are working with the animals immune system, therefore it can take a long time for them to get better."

Time is something in very short supply on most farms, spending it in the most profitable way is part of the decision making. What to treat with? Whether to treat at all? Treat or cull? Treat and have a value as a cull? Treat and avoid a cull? What is better welfare? What makes the animal healthy? What helps make their farm financially viable? There is certainly no easy answer.

recorded adverse effect, as if they contained poisons and were being peddled to an unsuspecting public. Today, with increasing demand for reliance on evidence based medicine there is a presumption that the effect of all modern medicines are understood before they are used. In reality, the table below, taken from the BMA website, showing benefit of all treatments suggests otherwise. Discounting homoeopathy because there is no explanation for its action is not entirely rational.



It is often the success of homoeopathy within the family or on a favourite dog which convinces the sceptic.

David Eyles. "Our ageing black labrador started to get difficulties with his back end and not being able to stand properly. We took him to a local vet who prescribed NSAIDs. Within a few hours he was projectile vomiting and had diarrhoea which left us with an extremely ill and unhappy dog and a vet who could only suggest taking him off the Metacam. We took him to a homoeopathic vet who put him on Conium 30c. Within 24 hours, Barney was back on his feet again, with no vomiting or diarrhoea. Barney carried on with a high quality of life for another three years. I began think there was something in this homoeopathy lark." After taking the HAWL course David became more and more convinced and confident using it widely on his own sheep and sending us some cases - see green box.

Liz Best, dairy farmer sent us some anecdotes:

A Jack Russell with acute breathing difficulties. "She would shudder as if she could not breathe in and seemed to be suffocating. We visited the vet twice, probably a virus they said, were given anti-inflammatories and antibiotics and two weeks later she was still the same so I looked this up in the books and selected a remedy and the next day she was fine and has had no recurrence"

Graham Mackay was herdsman for J Downes and Son when he took the HAWL course. He looked after 150 Friesian cows plus followers. Angus cross calves were reared for beef. They had a rolling 12 month SCC -150 000, calving interval 405 days, successful first insemination 65%, average service 1.6. A year after taking the course he sent us this report.

Before coming to England to work on an organic dairy farm I had never heard of homoeopathy for animals. Introduced to this form of treatment by my employers, Messrs Downes I was initially sceptical. The Downes' sent me on the HAWL course and I started using homeopathic remedies in my work as herdsman. In a short time I was convinced of the value of homoeopathy and isopathy to the stockman. Over the last twelve months I have treated 49 cases of mastitis using various homeopathic remedies. The most dramatic was cow # 11. She came in one morning with a violently swollen and painful quarter. She was uncharacteristically nervous and fidgety and lashed out as I approached. I applied one squirt of belladonna resigning myself to weeks of arduous treatment and possible loss of that quarter. However that evening the swelling was down, there were a few clots, the cow was her normal placid self. I applied SSC, (sulphur, silica and carbo veg) and the following morning she was clear on the California mastitis test. A week later this cow tested 16 on somatic cell count in the monthly milk recording. We have of course experienced cases where the initial treatment failed to have the desired result but with a change in remedy success has been achieved.

We have had two cows which have been culled due to continuous infection and little or no success in treatment, Furthermore we have lost one quarter on four cows where treatment was either ineffective or where some underlying sustaining cause meant repeated reinfection..

A greasy piglet. A little runt of 10 was bitten on the face in the scramble for the teat and got a Staph infection. Its face became a black sticky mess and it lost condition. It had two lots of antibiotics with no effect and after several days it was still oozing so I looked it up in my repertory and selected a remedy and gave it 3 doses that day. The next morning it was out playing with the others and a week later the skin was perfect.

Krystyna Baker also a dairy farmer and homoeopath sent us these stories:

1. Calf with distressed, laboured breathing, very cold, lack of muscle tone. Tried Carbo veg, no response, tried Ant tart, no response except pulse was weaker and rapid, had human kit with me so tried Laurocerasus, 30c pill into mouth, breathing improved almost immediately, repeated dose every 5/6 minutes, within half an hour, breathing normally and attempting to stand. Four weeks later he made top price at Frome market!

We have not once resorted to antibiotics to treat lactating cows. Nor have we used any intrusive injections. This has meant a minimum of milk withdrawal. Furthermore we have many occasions to use homoeopathy for the wellbeing of our stock. Aconite is used routinely for stressful operations such as dehorning, castrating, transport, freeze branding. Ignatia for removing calves from their mothers and Caulophyllum for calving cows. I can only say that my impression, based on over thirty years of working with livestock is that these remedies work.

I feel that the advantages of Homoeopathy are:

- 1 No physically traumatic injections.
- 2 Treatment in parlour at milking time.
- 3 Minimum milk withdrawal. Only from affected quarter.
- 4 No danger of anti-biotic contamination in bulk tank.
- 5 No plastic pollution. Use re-usable squirt bottles.
- 6 No dirty needles or disposal of used needles.

2. Steer calf aged 5 months, large swelling of umbilical stump, reluctant to leave shed, slightly aggressive, shivering and unwilling to be examined. I gave Hepar Sulph 200c as a spray on nose, repeated 4 times at hourly intervals. The next day, suppuration from umbilical for two days. After one week, behaviour normal and lump reduced. Gave Silica 30 as single dose. three weeks later, lump resolved.

Sheep.

"We have had good success with abscesses. Ralph and Melkior were Dorset Down rams. Melkior had been bitten by a dog in the upper part of one of his forelegs creating a nasty wound that turned septic before we noticed that there was a problem. A course of antibiotics was tried and this reduced the problem initially, but the wound continued to suppurate and then get worse again. Hepar sulph. at low potency was used initially to encourage drainage and then high potency to finish off."

Ralph contracted a nasty abscess perhaps from a blackthorn thorn, in one of his front toes. Again, on the advice from a conventional vet, antibiotics were given along with prolonged attempts to drain the abscess with a poultice but to no avail. The vet then advised amputation of the toe in question but this would have meant his ability to work would have been severely compromised. Once again, Hepar sulph. was used. This cleared the problem after two or three weeks and Ralph continued to work for another three years.

A ewe had a very deep abscess which did not go black, but was nevertheless nasty. Hepar Sulph and Silica again resolved the problem, although she has lost the use of the affected quarter.

Asthma in new born lamb – A lamb born with difficulty; The umbilical chord appeared to be already snapped as I pulled the lamb out, indicating that it had severed too early. Immediately the lamb drew breath, it started to wheeze severely. Attempts to swing it upside down to expel fluid from it's lungs made no apparent difference, and although it clearly had the will to live, it's breathing prevented it from getting up and taking colostrum from it's mother. After attempts with Aconite 200c and Antim. tart.200c failed, I tried Ipecacuanha 30c with rapid dosing intervals of 30 seconds for about 3 or 4 doses. Within minutes, the wheezing stopped and the lamb recovered normally. [“Respiration - <least motion - ...has to sit up at night to breathe.... Gasps for air....Difficult expiration. Suffocative attacks from foreign substance in trachea. Threatened suffocation from accumulation of mucus. Conditions -Persons who have history of....loss of blood. Causation – Injuries....loss of blood.] Watery Mouth – We now have a standard approach for this which is quick and has so far proved almost 100% effective: A spoonful of live organic yoghurt (we use Yeo Valley because that is what the local shop sells) along with a dose of E. Coli nosode 30c. Carry on with this treatment twice a day for 2 – 3 days or until recovery. We have never needed to use antibiotics since this was suggested to us by Brenda Hall. However, there is a similar symptom of wet bubbling around the mouth, which is caused by the middle stages of pasteurilla pneumonia which we treat differently.



Welsh farmer Stuart Taylor:- "Homoeopathy is so much more than the remedies. I came to it from the background of a family livestock farm, an organic one at that, but was still impressed and inspired by the compassion for the individual animal found in homoeopathy., the consideration of the impact of our management and weather etc is exemplary. As for the remedies themselves, they have been in use for 200 years, quite a good track record. My own experience is that classical remedies work better than nosodes. I use them to avoid antibiotics in the milk, perhaps alleviate no-hope cases where the vet can do no more."

Students of homoeopathy rapidly realize that homoeopathy is a very complete system, with firm guidelines and a sound philosophy behind it. The HAWL course established in 2001 teaches the farmer HAWL to do it properly, how, in all sorts of farm scenarios, to make decisions about remedy choice as well as how, when, where and indeed whether to use homoeopathy.

With some grounding in the use of homoeopathy farmers use it very widely and see it as an option, another tool, and something they can do themselves to help their animals, another string to their bow. It improves their ability to understand what to do, offers them an alternative (which they may or may not take) and may even change the way they farm.

Rob Bostock who farms a 600 acre Cheshire dairy farm explained that they did not need to use homoeopathy very much any more.

"We began organic conversion in April 2000 and because of this I felt it would be useful to take the HAWL course. The course made me realize that animals have strong powers of recovery without antibiotic therapy and, if the system allowed animals to express natural behaviour, in natural surrounding and grazing organic grass, problems would minimize. A consultant who specialises in dairy farming told me that the only farms consistently making good profits and cash surpluses and having a good work/leisure balance were farms focusing on profit (not production) and low costs for as long as possible each year. We adopted this system in 2003 and have never looked back."

Robert Hyde who has milking sheep said he used homoeopathy with great effect when they raised the lambs in a polytunnel.

“We saved numbers of them, antibiotics did not work fast enough”

but they changed the system and now leave the lambs with the ewes. After that no more problems so no need of remedies. What is it about the homoeopathic system that begins this sea change? There are well established rules behind the use of homoeopathy, one of the "rules" refers to "maintaining causes", things which may stop the animal getting better and which should, if possible, be removed before trying homoeopathy, or any other treatment come to that. Much better to avoid the problems in the first place.



Statistics for the first year after I took the HAWL course

MASTITIS: cases 49	Cows treated successfully first time	19
	Success after change of remedy	9
	Cows relapsing after apparent success	8
	Cows requiring repeated treatment over weeks	4
	Cows culled due to failure of treatment	2
REMEDIES USED:	Quarters lost to failed treatment	4
	Belladonna, BBU (belladonna, bryonia and urtica urens), SSC (sulphur, silica and carbo veg), Phytolacca, herd specific mastitis nosode.	
SUMMER MASTITIS: cases 1	Heifer treated over three weeks with Pyrogen aconite	1
BLOOD IN MILK: cases 4	Treated successfully in not more than four milkings with phosphorous	4
INJURIES: cases 5	All responded to treatment with Ipecac, AAA (aconite, ambras grisea, and argent nit),staphi sagria and pyrogen.	5
RETAINED AFTERBIRTH & METRITIS: cases 8	Cows responding to pulsatilla	4
	Didn't respond. Treated with anti-biotic pessaries and or Iodine douche.	4
MILK FEVER & STAGGERS:	Treated homeopathically as well as conventional calcium and magnesium injections.	
ANOESTRUS:	4 cows treated with sepia subsequently in calf.	
EYES:	Successful with New Forest Nozode.	4
	Swollen eyes treated with Apis mel.	3
DIGESTIVE DISORDERS:	Treated with nux vom.	5
LETHARGY:	Treated with calc carb	2
FEET	Treated with AAA (aconite, ambras grisea argent nit), belladonna, thuja, hep sulph, and aconite.	20
	Those needing 3 to 5 treatments.	5
	NO antibiotics used.	

John Newman

You look more carefully, you start looking at the why is this happening, is there something else happening, was it in the morning or the afternoon, all those things that make you think about it. The good stockperson is already very conscious of what the animal is doing.

For others, meeting homoeopathy changes more than just the way they farm, five HAWL farmers have taken the four year training to become homoeopaths. For Bali Martindale, meeting homoeopathy literally changed the direction of her life. After studies in dairy management at Usk and running all sorts of farms conventionally for many year, homoeopathy so intrigued that she is now a fully fledged homoeopath with her own busy practice.

I didn't find homoeopathy it found me, it sought me out and chased me until I had to take notice of it and then continued to drop hints,

appear in my thoughts at odd times and roll metaphysical boulders in my path until I was forced to acknowledge its extraordinary efficacy for myself.

Back in 1984 I had a few goats that ran with a beef suckler herd I cared for. One of the goats, a pretty anglo-nubian – the ones with the long floppy ears & roman noses – developed painful knees. Not much to note but it made her hobbly to walk, struggling to keep up with the others. She developing an awkward painful gat., her knees were hot, painful to touch and the vet gave antibiotics. Sixteen months & many antibiotic prescriptions later this little goat had not changed but she had begun to kneel instead of stand as her posture of choice or necessity. Antibiotics had taken her nowhere and I felt a decision was needed about this delightful little goat's future. While idling in a chemist shop soon after, I picked up a leaflet on homoeopathy, Nelsons I think.

Painful joints, better for pressure: Bry. "Hmmm worth a try" I thought. "Please can I have some Bry" I said to an amused pharmacist. Short confusion and then I was home with a bottle of Bryonia 6c. One dose and twenty minutes later my goat was upright – What? How can that be? No way! After one and a half years of veterinary's finest and considerable expense, a few idle moments in a shop had changed this goat's life, and mine, forever!

As the years passed and I continued to work as a dairy herd manager, I could see more clearly how very much the livestock around me needed something more in tune for them than end-stage veterinary management, which in production animals with narrow profit margins often meant early culling, long before their potential was met."

Letter from a sceptic - Alex Mossop

As a manager of 370 dairy cows in Cheshire I wonder how many stock people out there were, are, like me, anxious to reduce the use of those expensive antibiotics and improve herd health at the same time! Someone suggested that homoeopathy could help. Well, I'd tried those nosodes, they were useless, so to me that meant Homoeopathy obviously doesn't work, or does it? We decided that perhaps it might work better if we understood something about it so my herdsman and I attended a 3-day course Homoeopathy At Wellie Level and I have to say I am now not a Sceptic but a big Enthusiast.

The course gave us a whole different prospective on treating our animals, it gave us the basic tools to start using homoeopathic remedy's to great effect and the more we use them the more confident we get, the better the results. Don't get me wrong; we don't get it right every time. We change remedy if the chosen one does not appear to be working. But what I can say is, in the last few months, out of 44 treatments from Foul in the Foot to Pneumonia to Mastitis we have only resorted to antibiotics on 7 occasions. My first success was with a remedy called Caulophyllum, which acts on the womb. A maiden heifer obviously been calving for a while, calf's feet just showing and backwards. Normally I would be getting the calving aid and pulling like mad, upsetting and possibly damaging the heifer and probably getting a dead calf. Instead I treated it with Caulophyllum and left her for 25 minutes. When I returned the calf was out to the thigh and just a rope was needed to pull a live calf and as a bonus the heifer parted with her after-birth 45 minutes later.

“Now, if we have a sick animal, instead of heading to the drugs cabinet for an appropriate antibiotic, we head for our books, records and remedy box. We treat the whole animal and not just one symptom.”

HAWL to do it properly

Self taught farmers say it was hard to learn. Broadly speaking there were three options open to the farmer, find a homoeopathic vet, ask a supplier, or learn how to use it yourself. And perhaps a fourth, phone a friend. Since 2001 there has been another option. Homoeopathy at Wellie Level runs courses for farmers who want to add homoeopathy to their management strategy. A registered not for profit organisation HAWL has become an established part of the farming scene having taught nearly 500 farmers and being selected as a finalist for the Farmers Weekly Farm Advisor of the Year Awards of 2010. Students have come from all over Britain to attend the Gloucestershire based course, finding that the three days help them understand the basics of what can seem like a very daunting subject and they send back very positive comments. Though this is a serious subject we do aim to make learning HAWL to do it fun.



John Newman, farm manager.

"If I think back to when we converted and I started talking about well we are going to use homoeopathy and before we did the course. There was that feeling of its far too complicated, can't understand it, we are not that clever. Before we did the Wellie Level course we had been to various seminars, one I vividly remember when our dairy man slept though the whole thing, it was totally over the top of his head, it was a very complex presentation. HAWL made it all so clear and simple and now we use it all the time."

John Nattle, dairy farmer.

"We first used Homoeopathy some worked and others didn't and we didn't know why. The HAWL course clarified things for us, how it might work and how to make it work better for us. We definitely understood more, and some things worked spectacularly well and others didn't."

David Wilson, farm manager.

"The HAWL course has been very useful in firing up some key members of staff who now embrace it more fully than they did before."

Steve Castle, farm manager.

"The course was geared to be useful and practical – I could clearly understand as a real novice, and was perfectly able to apply the knowledge shared right from the outset, the mentoring over the duration helped embed what we learnt in the classroom – The structure and concept of splitting the training up to allow practical use of what you had learnt and then being able to come back a short while later for input and support was great."

Lynnie Hutchison, sheep farmer

"I was a bit apprehensive but the first day was brilliant. Starting right at the basics it helped me string together the bits I'd gleaned from various books, a couple of talks and our own experience. The tutors were great making sense of the many questions I had. The gaps between parts of the course were great for practising what you'd learnt and meant that we had lots of questions to go back with for the next instalment. The course resources were great, I particularly found the tapes of the lectures handy, listening to them in the car or as I got on with other work and I go back to them every year or so now to refresh myself."

Virginia Deradour is an organic farmer in Buckinghamshire who came, like many, because they were in conversion and sent this report:-

"I found it inspiring and rewarding. The course, is run on three days, with weeks in between to practise new skills. On the first day we heard outline of the rules of homoeopathy and then we learnt about six remedies very often indicated in the daily routines of farm life. Days 2 and 3 built on our newfound knowledge and we had case studies to learn how to select remedies from an excellent simple repertory for animals. At the end of the course I went away with the feeling I understood homoeopathy but I would not be reprimanded for using allopathic medicine when necessary. HAWL is a great course and the only thing you need is eyesight."

Eva Garrod, Head of Agriculture at Brymore School in Somerset, a state boarding school for 180 boys who learn farming skills on the school's own mixed farm, came to see if they should introduce homoeopathy to the boys working towards the NVQ level 2 livestock production qualification.

"It was certainly "Wellie Level", very down to earth and practical (which our boys are). I went along with very little knowledge and a level of uncertainty. Some of the other students were even more sceptical than I. It was a well structured course with a month between sessions in which to "have a go" on your own farm. It started at a simple level which was easy to apply then reinforcement built on your previous knowledge to enable you to take it further each day and to a level that suited you. The lifeline was access to a qualified homoeopathic vet over the phone. The organiser was very helpful and approachable and the excellent teaching, from a range of homoeopaths and homoeopathic vets encouraged you to grasp the concept and build your confidence. I would recommend that whether you are organic or not the idea needs considering, I was amazed at the results as were the sceptics on the course. It will certainly form part of the teaching for the boys at Brymore then they can make their own decisions"

Max Prestwood, who commissioned a course in Worcester for CLA members reported that "The people who attended the course and those involved in the background with the organisation are still saying that the Homoeopathy course was one of the best we've ever put on. It was also the only one I have ever found where nothing is sold."

Both conventional and organic farmers commented favourably on the HAWL course. They said that they used homoeopathy more once they understood what they were doing and that they would not willingly stop. The general consensus amongst organic farmers was that even if they were farming conventionally they would still use homoeopathy, that they would not willingly go back to using conventional medicines.

"If I absolutely had to chose between conventional drugs and homoeopathy I would chose homoeopathy".

Anthony Curnow.



HAWL courses are held at our home base at Duchy Home Farm in Tetbury, Gloucestershire twice a year, in Spring and Autumn.

The course is structured to take the farmer carefully through the steps of the homoeopathic thought process and introduces the practicalities as well as the theories of using it as a tool within the farm health management strategy.

Day 1 looks at avoiding problems and the remedies which help within the daily routine of farm life.

Day 2 looks at creating the farm health plan and moves onto treating young stock and finding the right remedy.

Day 3 looks at the more intransigent problems of the animal, chronic problems like infertility and high cell counts which may otherwise result in culling. A teaching manual, reference book and revision CDs are included in the cost.

www.hawl.co.uk

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