

Homoeopathy at Wellie Level

Teaching the responsible use of homoeopathy on the farm

Distributed to all HAWL farmers and "Friends of HAWL". February 2012

This is the first newsletter we have produced since the "This is Farm Homoeopathy" paper was published last year. To collect material for that newspaper meant a lot of traveling and phoning but it was really fun to meet so many of our former students again and to be able to sit and chat a bit about what really happens when you use homoeopathy on the farm. I hope that in 2012 I will be able to visit and catch up with many more.

The newspaper came about because someone fairly influential asked me to explain what "this HAWL thing was" (I was asking for money at the time!!) and trying to condense homoeopathy, farming and HAWL into a two minute slot was a bit daunting. I came away feeling I had wasted an opportunity. Lawrence Woodward (who ran the Elm Farm Organic Research Centre) suggested that we needed a publication which said simply "This is Farm Homoeopathy". It certainly offered a new goal, (and a chance to catch up with former HAWL students) and morphed from erudite book into glossy newspaper along the way and has been distributed to something over 10,000 people.

Getting a newspaper professionally set up printed and distributed costs a fortune and would have been impossible without generous donations from The Sheepdove, Raymond Oppenheimer and Marris Trusts. We decided not to sell advertising space. HAWL has established a reputation for unbiased "dis-interested" information which it is important to protect (and, if I am honest, collecting adverts would have been yet another job) but I did ask for help sending it out to other homoeopaths, via their societies, and Helios and Ainsworths came up trumps. I hope that a copy is now in the waiting rooms of every homoeopath in the country.

The paper did generate quite a lot of response, all but two positive, and those were to complain that the PO had not put enough postage on their envelope and they had to queue and pay excess. I sympathised with that.

In 2011 we were able to afford stands at the Royal Cornwall and the Malvern Shows and the ORC and SA conferences. Several HAWL teachers and other volunteers helped, talking to the enquirers about the benefits of homoeopathy generally and HAWL specifically. This all seemed to generated plenty of interest because we had

enough applications for two Autumn courses, one in Tetbury and one, partially funded by Duchy College, in Cornwall, The latter was held in a lovely venue, a large airy room in Woodland Valley Farm near Ladock.

Other folk have been pretty active too.

The recent attacks on homoeopathy and its practitioners has left many of us, amongst other reactions, a bit startled. Maybe we were complacent? But what were we doing that was so wrong? As few homoeopaths make a huge or exploitative profit out of it, and few (if any?) homoeopaths have been prosecuted for malpractice, poisoning or murder by remedy maybe we simply felt that, living in a democracy which purports to protect freedom of choice and speech, we were just going about our daily business and were a threat to no one, Indeed I would assume that we felt we were doing a modicum of good and that we made a small but positive contribution to the general health and wellbeing of our little worlds. And then wham suddenly we are labeled charlatans and peddlers of snake oil.

However, perhaps the reaction these detractors have provoked has been, in turn, a bit startling to them. It has certainly galvanised the homoeopathic community into collecting data, setting up research, employing PR companies, learning how to handle the media, learning how to promote ourselves more effectively and generally biting back. But perhaps now we need to look a bit more clearly at where we might be going?

Pandoras box? It has been suggested, having a core of HAWL farmers with a basic knowledge, we might now do some research into and here I get stuck, because I have to ask myself exactly *what would we want show, and to whom?* Do we want to show "Science" that we are "scientifically acceptable"? Entire flocks of sheep reacting positively to a homoeopathic remedy is difficult to rationalize away, but should we all take a pause here and think very carefully. What is all this emphasis on research for? What exactly do we want to achieve? Beware for what do you wish because you may get it. The Law of Unintended Consequences looms large, not just for HAWL.

What are we looking at, what are we looking for, why are we investigating at all. Do we want to help the animal, to feel better, get better, live longer, have better health? The farmer, save money, reduce chemical inputs, have a healthier herd/flock, improve animal welfare standards, have an answer to diseases, improve management, avoid soil and water contaminations, be empowered, have a sense of professional satisfaction? The consumer, have chemical free food, lessen the risk of antibiotic resistances, have cheaper food, get the organic products they think they are buying? Or are we more interested in proving that homeopathic remedies work, per se? Are we keener to show the world and the medical professions that they are wrong and the diluted and succussed products (in reality ancillary to homoeopathy) do have an effect and are worthy of being accepted as proven medicines?

Do we want to show that homoeopathy is another way of maintaining and restoring health or show it can be measured by modern medical research methods and stands up to the stringent tests applied to modern drugs. And having thought hard about what we want to achieve, do we really understand the implications of our decision? What may be the unintended consequence?

Going back to my thought, being careful for what we wish, in the context of the farm animal, for what purpose might we do research on, or with, HAWL farmers and/or their results? And if, as has been suggested, the EU offers two million Euros (assuming they still exist) for research into farm animal homoeopathy, will this lead to large pharmaceuticals registering our remedies as theirs? To all remedies becoming POM for the production animals as they are in some EU countries, or even banned? Making remedies more expensive and even unobtainable for the farmer? And what **sort** of research and **who** will do it? Why not just spend 2 million on training the farmers in what we all already know i.e how to use homoeopathic remedies effectively.

David Eyles, whose musings on coincidence come later, was so startled by the effect of *Caulophyllum* on the condition called "ring womb" in lambing that he timed the effect, it took 10 seconds in every case. Do we want *Caulophyllum* registered or licensed or what ever the regulators call it? We already know what it does. David also did a study, advised by Robert Mathie at the British Homoeopathic Association, into pain reduction in tail ringing of lambs (a

rubber band around to stop the blood and make the end of the tail drop off, keeps the back end cleaner and so reduces "fly strike" when maggots burrow into the skin). He made his own selection of remedies because he knew the remedy pictures, and treated alternate lambs, measuring the pain (from -3 (on its back waving its legs) to +3 (behaving normally)) and found a 30% reduction in the treated ones. Do we want someone to license this combination so the vets can confidently prescribe it but farmers have to ask their conventional vet for the prescription? It might show the world that homoeopathy works but would it also take it away from the world and give it to the profit makers? These are issues that the success of HAWL has raised and I have not reconciled.

Quite a bit of work is going on today which wonders if this accepted scientific method is actually fool proof. It is generally accepted that if a treatment, particularly a medicine, has not been shown to demonstrate safety, quality and efficacy under rigorous double blind trials, (variables excluded and results repeatable), it cannot be used. A system developed to test new drugs is now applied to all, even ones which have been used for centuries, like homoeopathic preparations, which make no claim of efficacy, only effectiveness if properly used. Being able to replicate is the foundation of modern research, seen as safeguard against "the creep of subjectivity". But some researchers are finding that long held well replicated findings are no longer provable, especially in previously registered drugs. A New Yorker article in Dec 2010 asked "*If replication is what separates the rigor of science from the squishiness of pseudoscience, where do we put all these rigorously validated findings that can no longer be proved? Which results should we believe?.....We like to pretend that our experiments define the truth for us. But that's often not the case. Just because an idea is true doesn't mean it can be proved. And just because an idea can be proved doesn't mean it's true. When the experiments are done, we still have to choose what to believe*".

Research and publication seem biased towards cultural and social pressures and is referred to by "Science" magazine, "Nobel Laureate Montagnier takes homeopathy seriously". The professor, who won a Nobel Prize in 2008, is quoted as saying "I can't say that homeopathy is right in everything. What I can say now is that the high dilutions are right. High dilutions of something are not nothing. They are water structures which

mimic the original molecules.". The professor points out that his search for funding on the subject has forced him to move to China. The lack of published work he suggests is because of a sort of "intellectual terror from people who don't understand it.....it's not pseudoscience. It's not quackery. These are real phenomena which deserve further study."

Taking another view of this debate about whether homoeopathy works and avoid the "it does" "It doesn't" squabble described by Chris Auckland MRCVS as "like children in a play ground". Could it be possible to stand back a bit, look at it all from another angle?

The purpose of language is to communicate, and with in that we get many tongues. If one judges Chinese by the rules of English it cannot work, Chinese takes the same words and changes the tone to change the meaning, "mai" can mean buy or sell according to the way you say it, words are written as combinations of "pictures", there are no tenses and by our rules, no logic, it cannot be possible to communicate effectively. Yet Chinese has served millions very well for thousands of year. There are fundamental differences in the way they and we looks at things. It goes back to our Aristotelian concept of logic, if its black it cannot be white, but, to the Chinese, there cannot be black without white.(And incidentally historically there was no Chinese word for logic, its "lo zhi" in Pin Yin).

Is it possible that we are trying to do the same with disciplines like Homoeopathy, judging it by the rules we understand and which apply to our Western system of illness and disease? Is it serendipitous that to investigate this phenomena a leading scientist has had to go to China? And is it really valid or simply arrogant to write off the multiple confirming findings of many farmers, professionals in their own right, reporting on the effect of their daily use of homoeopathy within the subject they, more than any one, are qualified to make judgements about, that of keeping animals healthy?

Observations like this one from Anthony Curnow who came on our first Cornwall course. As with all courses and particularly on well funded ones where sponsored students are paying a lot less than the normal cost, many of them come with a good dose of scepticism. Its exciting and rewarding to see their satisfaction as they find this is not a hit and miss thing, there is a very sound system behind a homoeopathic prescription and,

that they can actually help their animals themselves.

"While doing the HAWL course I had a heifer whose brisket swelled up with oedema following birth problems. She was put on antibiotics and steroids and the vet diagnosed heart problems – among other things she had tachycardia – her heart was going like the clappers.

We took her case and decided to give her Digitalis as the best symptom match.

That night when I went to get the cows in she was eating foxgloves in the corner of the field. Cows don't do that. That's the point at which I thought there must be something in this thing called homeopathy.

She made a full and quick recovery and went on to have more calves."

Digitalis is not a remedy we mention on the basic course, Anthony had (yippee) followed the instructions, taken the case, looked up in the repertory and found the specific remedy to help his cow. This is why we run HAWL, to help the farmer feel empowered again. And its hearing stories like this that gives us the most enormous feeling of satisfaction, thank you Anthony, it is so rewarding to have this sort of feed back.

Does it really work or is it coincidence?

David Eyles like Anthony also arrived as something of a sceptic and has become so convinced about the effectiveness of remedy action that he has begun to record his experiences

"It was a bright sunny morning in January and all was peaceful in the barn as I fed and watered the ewes. The lambs born in the previous twelve hours were all settled with their dams in the mothering pens. Those who had lambed a few days earlier were dozing gently in the large crèche pen. The sun filtered through the slats in the barn sides and criss-crossed the contented ewes with alternate light and dark stripes.

Most of the lambs were asleep and all was quiet. But one ewe in particular was a bit too quiet. She had been having contractions intermittently for the last couple of hours or so, but had now stopped and was sulking. I should, perhaps, have realised earlier that there was a problem. As I knelt down beside her to check what was going on, she didn't bother to move. It soon became apparent that the lamb was mal-presented, with its back feet coming out first. Initial attempts to pull it out proved difficult. For some reason, the lamb appeared to be stuck and the ewe had stopped trying an hour ago. After a few minutes, it was fairly clear that she was almost dry inside and that the lamb was dead. I was left with

two possibilities. One was to use brute force and a lot of lubricant and then hope that I would pull the lamb out without too much damage to the ewe. But this would undoubtedly traumatise her. The other option was to try some homoeopathy and see if that helped. A quick search in the little shed that we use as a dispensary at lambing time, produced a bottle of *Caulophyllum* 12c. I put a couple of drops in her mouth and turned around to put the bottle upon an up-turned bucket.

Before I had screwed the lid of the bottle tight and put it down, the ewe gave an enormous heave. And then another one. I grabbed the exposed legs of the lamb and, patiently in time with the now regular and powerful contractions of the ewe, pulled the lamb out quite easily. As I suspected, the lamb had died perhaps two or three days earlier and perhaps that is why the lamb was both mal-presented and dry; and the ewe's contractions were infrequent and half-hearted. But the homoeopathy had done its job by starting work within a second or two of being administered and saved the ewe from the trauma of a much more unpleasant delivery.

Just occasionally, something like this happens with the use of homoeopathy on the farm. I am left in no doubt whatsoever that, despite the improbability of ultra-dilutions leaving nothing of any pharmacological significance in the medicine, this form of treatment works – sometimes spectacularly, as in this case. Homoeopathy is not a panacea and it will not bring animals back from the dead. It is fair to point out that sometimes it does not appear to work as well as I hoped – something I can also say about conventional veterinary medicines.

Sometimes, when there is a life-threatening infection, we use antibiotics as well as homoeopathy. But in general, homoeopathy works well enough for it to take its place alongside the tractor, the Land-Rover and various other bits of kit that are essential pieces of technology for a modern livestock farm”.

Caulophyllum is a remedy taught on the first day of the course, and it is a remedy with a specific effect on the muscles of the uterus. Sheep farmers particularly find it useful in the condition called “ring womb” when the neck of the uterus feels as if held closed with a wire. It is common practice to give internal massage to the uterus to assist in relaxation and stimulate contractions, but this sort of manual intervention, particularly from large hands can cause damage and induce infection.

David says there were two options, actually there are really three, the third one being to shoot

the animal. Very few ewes are worth the cost of a vets visit or a caesarian.

Despite the assertions of the sceptic, there are plenty of well constructed trials into remedy use. The following follows the gold standard of RCT but not perhaps of remedy selection, or production system? **Homeopathy as replacement to antibiotics in the case of *Escherichia coli* diarrhoea in neonatal piglets** 2009 Biological Farming Systems Group, Wageningen Univ. Homeopathy (2010) 99, 57–62.

Background: The use of antibiotics in the livestock sector is increasing to such an extent that it threatens negative consequences for human health, animal health and the environment. Homeopathy might be an alternative to antibiotics. It has therefore been tested in a randomised placebo-controlled trial to prevent *Escherichia coli* diarrhoea in neonatal piglets.

Method: On a commercial pig farm 52 sows of different parities, in their last month of gestation, were treated twice a week with either the homeopathic agent *Coli* 30K or placebo. The 525 piglets born from these sows were scored for occurrence and duration of diarrhoea.

Results: Piglets of the homeopathic treated group had significantly less *E. coli* diarrhoea than piglets in the placebo group ($P < .0001$). Especially piglets from first parity sows gave a good response to treatment with *Coli* 30K. The diarrhoea seemed to be less severe in the homeopathically treated litters, there was less transmission and duration appeared shorter.

I have recently made contact with an American vet who is running a “webinar” on chronic problems, miasms and treatments which is to start in Feb. One phrase of his I like, in a list of what homoeopathy is not is “its not cook book, diagnosis driven (except in a few crisis situations)” To me the above trial is not homoeopathy, its diagnosis driven isopathy. I think this is where a lot of HAWL farmers get stuck. We had an interesting exchange of emails on what to do about Orf, and it took several nudges from me and others to get the farmer concerned to say what he was seeing rather than just calling it Orf. Big mistake, huge, but one I think many of us make. Forget the name, look at what the animal is saying. Take the totality of the case, you spent enough time and money learning how.

I hope you read all this with interest and will then send us your own stories and observations. Chris