



The Farm Consultancy Group

Issue 115 -
May 2020



Welcome to our 115th edition of the newsletter. Included in this months newsletter are articles on stewardship schemes and deadlines, animal health products, milk recording data, reducing your milk production, livestock fly control, red tractor assessments, commodities updates and mineral supplies.

Your feedback and comments are most welcome. If clarification is required, please contact the article contributor or for more articles and news visit www.fcgagric.com.

Edited by Gerard Finnan of David Bardgett Ltd and The Farm Consultancy Group
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Mid-Tier Stewardship and Catchment Water Grant Deadlines - Emily Wynder

The 2020 Environmental Stewardship schemes application window is now open. We have intensive and extensive farmer clients applying or who have applied successfully for Mid-Tier, Higher-Tier, Water Capital Only and Wildlife Offers under the existing Countryside Stewardship Schemes which are in place to apply for until 2024.

You can apply for a £10k standalone Capital Water grant also if you are in a priority area. These grants are 100% grant aidable.

Important deadlines: (Subject to Possible Change due to Covid 19)

Application pack request deadline 31st May – If you haven't requested the application pack you cannot apply.

Apply to Natural England for CSFO approval 31st May – The Catchment Officer on farm visits are suspended currently but they are looking to approve proposed schemes with aid of video and photos. This will be a lot easier if the CSFO has visited farm before. **Contact your local officer today to book an appointment.**

Application deadline 31st July - Current deadline to apply for Mid Tier and Water Catchment Grants.

We are proceeding with applications where practical in the current circumstances and envisage farm visits resuming once lockdown restrictions begin to be removed.

For more information and to find out if you are in a priority area, please contact Emily Wynder at emilywynder@fcgagric.com or Tel: 07944 680469.

Animal Health Products & Advice - Steve Willats

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The sale of fly control products through DBL now has the backing of my expertise and experience as I am AMTRA SQP registered. This means that I can back up the sales of animal health & medicines for farm animals, including poultry and equine animals with sound practical advice based on my extensive product knowledge in the market.

With my understanding of the products available on farm, I have recently been investigating the different options that can be offered to the group. We can supply all wormer and fluke control products as well as fly/tick/lice insecticides in their different application modes.



For more information, advice and prices, contact Steve on Tel: 07395 498175 or email steve@davidbardgett.co.uk

A copy of this newsletter can be downloaded from our website @ www.davidbardgett.co.uk



Are You Making the Most of Your Milk Recording Data? - Andrew Jones

With the current social distancing measures in place, vets are recommending that their members only see animals on an emergency basis. Is now the time to be maximising the use of the data you have available from your milk recording?

Milk recording companies are still offering a full service with DIY recording to allow for social distancing. As well as yields, fats, proteins & SCC your recordings can you do much more. You can pregnancy test via your milk recording, and as vets aren't available for routine testing, is this the perfect time to give this service a go?



Individual animal data									
35026 No. J. JONES & SONS - click to select									
Clean Number: 1132									
T: 3. Age 4y6m. Parity 3. Last calved 12/6 apr. P201y									
Milk record summary									
No.	Calving	First service	2nd service	3rd service	4th service	5th service	6th service	7th service	8th service
1	08/11/00	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01	12/01/01
Event details for parity 3. Calved on 05/09/19									
Date	Event	Result	Days	Category	Sex	Operator	Cost		
27/03/01	77 SER	OK				DORRY			
28/03/01	207 SER	OK				DORRY			
11/05/01	343 SER	OK				LECTURER			
22/06/01	302 PS	OK	42			ATOR			
05/09/19	102 DAILY	OK				ATOR			

With limited access to vets and many feed advisors either not visiting or limiting their visits on farm, now might be a good time to be using the data that is being processed every time you milk record. There are some nutritionists (myself included), that know how to take the raw data (just a big excel file) and manipulate it to be able to show you the health of your herd without actually looking at your cows. It can highlight, for example, how effective any feeding of C16 is in the diet - so showing any potential loss from over feeding, loss of fat from foot pad - so highlighting not just BCS loss but also some forms of lameness, levels of saturated and unsaturated fats. This is important depending on your milk contract and rumen function. It shows how well the rumen is performing and how this can be affecting your milk solids production.

The above in combination with video calls and WhatsApp video clips of livestock feed etc. should ensure your livestock can still be rationed and managed to the optimum.

Contact Andrew at andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk or Tel: 07717 442888, on interpreting your milk records data. It is just making better use of a service for which you are already paying.

Reducing Milk Production Without Culling? - Mark Yearsley

As dairy producers are asked to reduce milk production due to Covid 19 and the spring flush, culling cows could be seen as taking the easy route shorter term. This will have longer term lower production implications for the herd and cause a bigger drop in cow prices short term. Considering a combination of the following three tactics, dairy farmers could reduce up to 14% of their milk production without culling cows.

Reduce milking frequency. Consider dropping a group of lower yielding cows on to once per day milking using the following criteria:

- Analyse your average seven-day herd production, then decide a cut off yield.
- Days in Milk - cows over 200 days for example
- Days Pregnant – 120 days for example

You may be surprised that 25% of you herd could fit into this bracket which potentially could drop their production by 20%.



Dry cows off earlier. One option to reduce your farm's total milk production is to dry off cows three to four months from calving. How much milk production is reduced will depend on the number of cows dried off and their current level of production. However, doing this has its own risks. Calving in cows that added body condition during a prolonged dry period is a higher possibility. It is important to feed these dry cows a low energy diet to avoid weight gain and maintain a body condition score of 3.

Feed milk to calves longer. Switching to whole milk from a milk replacer will absorb some production, but have you also considered feeding calves for 8 to 12 weeks? This will not have a detrimental effect on calves long term. Feeding fresh calved cow's milk to calves up to 5 days post calving can have several benefits too. That early milk still contains antibodies but also higher levels of nutrition, enhancing calf health. Beware of Johnes risk of transmission to calves feeding whole milk, depending on your herd status.

For more information on controlling milk production, contact Mark on Tel: 07984 785190 or email markyearsley@fcgagric.com

Livestock Fly Control – Steve Willats

The main types of fly causing economic loss in UK herds are stable, horn, house, face and head flies. While the threats from each variety are different – ranging from the spread of diseases such as summer mastitis and New Forest Eye (infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis) to constant irritation leading to feed inefficiency and weight loss – the control methods are the same. However, basic control measures will have particular strengths in specific situations. For instance, biological controls are more suited to intensive housed systems than to cattle at pasture.

Chemical pour-ons - Several products applied to the backs of animals are available, based on synthetic pyrethroids such as permethrin and deltamethrin. In an average summer, three or four treatments are usually required.

Ear tags containing cypermethrin are also available. They are very effective as most will kill flies on contact. Most products have zero milk withdrawal requirements and can be used during pregnancy and lactation. They are effective against all the major fly pests but provide little protection to the udder area.

Cow brushes with insecticide applicator - Insecticide applicators are incorporated into cow brush frames. As the animal passes under the horizontal brush, insecticide is applied through nozzles on to its back. Application rates and timings are highly variable, which means flies often receive sub-lethal doses of insecticide which can lead to resistance.

Fly hot spots - The first line of defence in all situations is to prevent fly eggs maturing. Therefore, prioritising sanitation is key to this. Fly eggs and larvae thrive in warm, moist organic matter such as undisturbed muck heaps, so aim to reduce these fly development sites including:

- Where the muck scraper can't reach in buildings.
- Calf hutches.
- A build-up of muck under troughs and in the corners of buildings.
- Manure storage areas - keep it very dry and compacted or as a slurry to minimise.
- Hay and straw stacked outside.
- At pasture, a build-up of muck at boundaries and under trees can harbour flies. Don't overstock these areas or graze for too long to reduce the risk.



For more information, advice and prices on fly control products this summer, contact Steve on
Tel: 07395 498175 or email steve@davidbardgett.co.uk

Red Tractor Remote Assessments - Emily Wynder

Red Tractor announced on the 15th April that they were to start using a remote assessment method to replace the usual farm audits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote assessment allows Red Tractor to ensure that standards are being met without having to send assessors out on farm. The remote assessments are done with the use of an online portal where you can upload documents and photos, also through live streaming videos and online telephone interviews.

If you are overdue an audit or are expecting one soon, it is important that you register to use the online portal; we are able to help you with the registration as well as provide you support with uploading the relevant documents, photos and information that is required. Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, Red Tractor are planning to continue using the portal for uploading documents and evidence, thus reducing the assessors time on farm.



I was previously a Red Tractor Inspector and can answer your queries or provide help and guidance with preparing for your assessment, including providing all the forms for the remote assessment.

Contact Emily at emilywynder@fcgagric.com or Tel: 07944 680469 for assistance.

Commodities Update (30/04) - Andrew Jones

Over the last month the pound has fluctuated in a narrow range against the major currencies. Oil is down further this month having spent most of the month bouncing around \$20-22/barrel, it is now up at \$24-25/barrel. There is currently no negative pricing for oil. Surprisingly, GDT rose slightly (+1.2%) at the beginning of April but has fallen a further 4.2% at the end of April. Cheddar was one of two products that saw a rise. Mid to long term analysts are not sure of the market trend as China re-entered the market at the latest auction showing strengthening demand, however the reality of a global recession will limit peoples spending power. UK milk prices depend purely on who your processor is and what markets they supply.

Milk Powder - SMP has reached a 6-month low, and this has now seen skim-based powders down £30-£100/t depending on level of inclusion. Whey prices have remained stable this month.

Feed - Soya has fallen over the month back to winter pricing just over £300/t on farm. Rape prices on farm currently around £260/t as no processing in Europe and worries of a poor harvest here in the UK. Cereals have eased back a couple of pounds the last month.

Fertiliser - Prices are stable. Urea availability is now limited being the end of the season and merchants are not purchasing at current pricing. Prices are expected to drop for the new season with talk of AN sub £200/t again. All this though depends on currency.

If you can I would be trying to not buy anymore fertiliser at this point in the season and wait until new season prices are announced (usually mid-Jun for AN) **but if you do need any fertiliser or up to date quotes, contact Andrew at andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk or Tel: 07717 442888.**



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Mineral Supply - Andrew Jones

David Bardgett Ltd can supply you with any on farm mineral requirements you might have. We have a range of standards available for dairy, beef & youngstock but also offer a service to provide a bespoke package to suit your needs. Bespoke might sound expensive but sometimes it can actually be cheaper to have a bespoke mineral for your farm because you might not have to supply certain requirements that you would otherwise be supplying in a standard mineral.

We can quote and supply based on your current specification, we just need a good clear picture of your current label, or take samples of your current feeds & water, along with a complete feed plan and herd production levels to have a mineral designed for your animals' needs.

We have three well respected mineral suppliers that ensure that we can offer you the most competitive price on your required specification. There can be a large variation sometimes between specification and the actual mineral supplied because of the large legal tolerances for minerals.

We use companies that supply to specification, and do not make changes to mineral specifications. If there is a change in the marketplace, we are consulted and then the customer.

We can offer from the simple commodity mineral or more complex specifications using the latest research and development and the requirements they have.

Contact Andrew at andrew@davidbardgett.co.uk or Tel: 07717 442888, in the first instance to discuss your requirements and we will see what we can do for you.