

# **The HAWL teaching programme in the UK**

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## ***Homeopathy in the last Decade***

At the end of the 1990's, there were few Homeopathic Vets in the the UK who were doing farm work. Quite a number of farmers were using Homeopathy but buying products from travelling salesmen or from pharmacies by telephone. They were using products that were probably nosodes but were labelled in such a way that it was not possible to know exactly what they contained. The organic movement was beginning to grow and many farmers thought that they could just substitute the use of antibiotics with the use of homeopathic remedies. This assumption particularly led to problems since the results obtained were very variable. This view begs one to challenge why farmers are embracing the organic ideals in the first place. In our opinion the organic approach requires a complete change in approach to farming.

Surveys of farmers revealed that many farmers were frustrated that they could attend starter days explaining what homeopathy was but it was difficult, if not impossible, to find out how to move on from there and learn how to use homeopathic remedies more effectively. Many were getting variable results and becoming disillusioned with homeopathy.

A group of veterinary and lay homeopaths were concerned about this misuse of homeopathy resulting in a bad reputation for Homeopathy, as well as the lack of knowledge in the farming community and decided to co-operate in the promotion of courses for farmers ensuring the Responsible Use of Homeopathy on Farms. Hence Homeopathy at Wellie Level (HAWL) was born.

The inspiration behind the concept and the co-ordinator was Chris Lees, a trained teacher, who has homeopathic training and has an Agricultural Degree. It was her dissertation at Agricultural College which identified the problems that we are trying to tackle. The whole rationale for the course is to protect Homeopathy but make it available to be used by any farmer who is prepared to understand the subject. Homeopathy is a serious subject but it is also fun.

We are not trying to replace the vet on the farm; we are not trying to turn the farmer into a vet. We are simply trying to give the farmer another tool to use in his management. It is vital to the success of using homeopathy that the animals are observed well and remedies given quickly and changed as appropriate. This cannot be achieved on the farm unless the farmer has some basic knowledge.

The tutors are Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons who have worked in farm practice and lay homeopaths with farming experience. The syllabus has been developed by individual tutors and by the group and has evolved over the last few years, following discussion and experience. It has now reached a stage at which we are putting it into a book form.

We have consciously avoided becoming connected to any commercial organisation. We have been supported by HRH the Prince of Wales who is very sympathetic to Organic Production and has given us a small amount of money to advertise our course and also allow us to use a lecture room on his Home farm for teaching.

We feel that to use homeopathy properly you need two skills:

- 1, Observation of the animal--the stockman's skill

## 2, Finding the Remedy-- the homeopath's skill

The basic course to teach these 2 skills is spread over 3 days and each day is 3-4 weeks apart. This time gap gives the student time to put into practice what they have learnt at the preceding module. Each course has a Co-ordinator who attends all 3 days and 6 tutors take half a day each. There is a vet and a lay homeopath in attendance each day. We feel that this is an advantage for the students as it exposes them to a variety of teachers and ways of expression.

On Day 1 we introduce the Principles of Homeopathy and 6 remedies that can be used on the farm in a variety of conditions without the need for difficult diagnoses. We talk about the observation of their animals and the way to collect symptoms and information that will prove useful in finding a homeopathic remedy. We also cover the purchase, storage and administration of remedies, and the review the books that are available.

On Day 2 we revise the principles and explore how the use of the first 6 remedies during the animal's year can help to avoid problems. We then start looking at the way animals differ when ill and the importance of collecting suitable symptoms in sick animals following the principle of **Totality of Symptoms**. The principle of treating **Like with Like** requires the matching of the animal symptoms with the remedy symptoms. This is achieved by the use of a **Repertory** and we have produced a simple farm repertory to do this. By doing exercises, the students are introduced to this process. The exercises are based on young animals with a green watery scour. There are many remedies that one could use for these symptoms but only one will cure a particular case. One can only find the correct remedy by looking at things like thirst or its absence, appetite, desire for warmth, behaviour etc.

On Day 3 we revise the process of remedy selection using exercises of pneumonia cases. We start to take the longer view by looking at chronic disease and how acute episodes can in fact have an underlying chronic base as shown by mastitis. We look at a couple of remedies that are particularly useful in fertility problems.

Each day provides homework which we will mark if the student wishes. We also provide a telephone helpline to a homeopathic vet during the course. This is not to provide the farmer with a cheap form of advice but to provide support to the student if they have queries related to anything they have learnt on the course. We encourage the students to keep record of the weather and any management changes and of any cases that they treat

We have held 10 courses now at our home base and around the country in 7 other sites. More than 250 farmers have completed the course.

### **What's in the future?**

- We are encouraging our students to collect as much data as possible.
- We are hoping to set up research projects on various farms
- We feel that we have developed a unique course of education for farmers and we would like to see it spread more widely to other areas.

There is no doubt that farmers who have successfully incorporated the principles of homeopathy into their stockmanship have achieved healthier animals and lower veterinary costs.

## ***The Current situation regarding Homeopathy***

### 1. The Antagonism

Homeopathy throughout its existence has attracted antagonism and this is true today as never before. One can be charitable and ascribe it to a fear of the unknown but equally one could say that economic forces may be behind the attacks. I am not going to dwell any more on this except to say that there is an element of belief abroad which says that if you have treated an animal with a conventional drug then you have safeguarded its welfare but if you use something like a homeopathic remedy then you have jeopardised its welfare. There are a number of Vets who believe that VS like me should be struck off for using Homeopathy because of the perceived risks to animal welfare.

### 2. The Law

The VMD has recently taken an interest in Homeopathic remedies but the situation has not really been clarified and has been described to me by a homeopathic Pharmacist 'as a mess'. A vet is allowed to use any product he chooses if he believes that it is beneficial for the animal. A farmer with food production animals legally can only buy and use licensed products and no homeopathic products at present are licensed. There is a move to grant the majority of Homeopathic remedies 'Grandfather Rights' but this has not happened yet and is unlikely to apply to nosodes.

I have already touched on animal welfare and would remind you of the responsibilities imposed on owners by the new Animal Welfare legislation. Action can be taken against owners of any animal – pet or farm if their actions are likely in the future to prejudice the health of these animals so that if you propose to use homeopathy in place of accepted conventional treatments you must be very certain of your knowledge and skills before you do this.

### ***Research***

The common complaint about homeopathy is that there is not enough evidence. Briefly there is more and more work being done showing the benefit of homeopathy.

### ***The situation on the farm***

There are homeopathic vets who believe that homeopathy for animals should be controlled by the veterinary profession. I believe that on the farm the major use for homeopathy is in first aid situations and as a management tool in promoting the health of the livestock and so the stockman needs the skill to be able to use these remedies immediately when they are needed.