



The long wet winter and summer of 2012 will have certainly replaced any soil moisture deficits. The position on how much nitrogen to apply this spring is not that easy to calculate. If crops had plenty of nitrogen last year but didn't do well, where leafy material left over from cauliflower crops has been ploughed in, then it is likely that residual nitrogen levels will be normal. Where crops did well last year or perhaps lower levels of fertiliser were applied last year, then the high rainfall levels will have depleted soil nitrogen supply (SNS). In this case it might be necessary to raise the level of nitrogen applied this season over and above what you would normally apply. Any reserve that would have been there in the past has gone. Obviously you must take care not to exceed recommended levels (recommended levels can be found on the internet at www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/rb209 or by your local agronomist, fertiliser rep). Other trace elements may well have leached given the high volumes of water such as Sulphur and Manganese. Those of you, who were able to spread slurry through the winter months (or those who spread it anyway despite the NVZ regulations but spread dirty water instead!) shouldn't rely too much on any nitrogen supplied during this period better to discount it. Where slurry has been applied from February onwards then only 30% of the nitrogen is available to the crop in any case

This year has for many been the first year of managing a large slurry store and whilst it is easy enough to fill it, managing it efficiently takes effort. In my experience of looking after them, the key was always to keep it liquid or certainly have liquid slurry to spread when the time is right. Slurry will naturally split into solid and liquid. Just spreading the liquid is wasteful in terms of just spreading dirty water at £40-48/hr and it will have little or no nitrogen value. If you are taking account of the nitrogen from slurry, then as the liquid thickens at what point was slurry with nitrogen in it actually applied? Then the solid has to be spread separately and dug out, the problem is, it's normally forgotten, grass has grown too quickly after cutting and will now cause a taint or will get racked up into second cut silage. The store has been left and now the store is half full with insufficient capacity going into the winter, which is an important point because in 2014 it looks likely DEFRA is going to extend the closed spreading period by a further two weeks. In summary;

- Keep it liquid
- Empty the lagoon/tank completely when you can at opportunities determined by you e.g. after first cut silage and onto stubbles
- Include the nitrogen applied as slurry to the nitrogen applied from the bag thereby reducing the overall purchased nitrogen
- Keep out foreign bodies such as plastic, string, canoes, tyres, livestock and most importantly you, your family and anybody who works for you!

CAULIFLOWERS CAUSING ME PROBLEMS....

The other day my partner purchased a cauliflower in a Penzance supermarket, as someone who takes an interest in such things, I immediately noticed that not only did it come from Spain but that it had cost us £2 of our hard earned cash! Devastated was I, to which she replied "well I just picked it up, not my fault, take it back, and stick it where the sun don't shine". A week later I picked up a small one from a local farm gate for 20p, with most farmers just getting 26p wholesale it does rather demonstrate the farmers lot! Although I thought it wise not to mention it to my partner again!



Health and Safety Audits

The HSE are making an increasing number of 'ad hoc' visits to farms in the area. If your Health and Safety is found to be lacking they can charge you £125 per hour for their time in rectifying the situation, which when the officer is coming from Plymouth could cost you £250 before he even gets to you! Edward has lots of H&S experience (risk and CoSHH assessments too) and can come out to your farm to make sure you are compliant with most health and safety regulations. And whilst he might not pick up on everything the fact that you are trying to comply with regulations might be in your favour.

If you require a large print copy of this edition or any other information please call the office on 01736 352012

GET INTO FARMING

FarmCornwall is working with **The Prince's Trust** to undertake a programme of training with young persons, between 16-24 years of age, who are interested in embarking upon a career in farming. The training programme will be carried out with the help of Duchy College and Kernow Training and will include some basic Health & Safety training, First Aid Training, Tractor Driving as well as some practical farm skills. It is envisaged that 12 pre-selected, young people will take part in the scheme which will be a mixture of on farm training and assessments and classroom sessions. At the end of the two week programme there is the potential for job opportunities or the chance to take up an apprenticeship with Duchy College.

If you are interested in this scheme in any way, either as a host farm or know someone who might want to take part then please call Edward on 01736 352 012.

Schmallenberg: A Vet's View

We (vets) are encountering an increasing number of difficult calvings, from mid february 2013 onwards, with deformed calves which are impossible to deliver naturally or normally. Often there are limb, neck and spinal deformities which are classic symptoms of Schmallenberg. I am advising our clients to monitor their calving cows closely and if there is no visible progress after 4 hours from the start of calving then the farmer would be advised to do a thorough examination of the cow, and in the case of heifers, I would recommend doing the same after 6 hours from onset of calving. If there is a problem with "head, legs or back or whatever" it is best to be 1 hour too early than 1 minute too late! We find that in the event of a Schmallenberg deformity, a Caesarian is usually the best and only safe option. It may not be a problem on many farms but it is best to be aware of potential problems. Should a farmer find a calving that is just INTRACTABLE using normal methods, this again should ring alarm bells. Also where there has been a protracted calving or lambing following the delivery of a Schmallenberg deformed foetus be on the look out for post parturition complications in the mother.

Whilst you should be aware of the above it might be very low percentage of calvings affected, and hopefully none at all.

Snowed under in paperwork? No time for chasing unpaid invoices?



Farm Secretarial Service

Debbie is a registered IAGSA farm secretary and book keeper. Debbie has worked alongside FarmCornwall for many years and offers a confidential and efficient service. If you need a book keeper or secretary please call **Debbie** on **07525 411774**



CAPTION COMPETITION

Winner will have their caption printed in the next newsletter.

Please send entries to:

Helena@farmcornwall.co.uk or

by post (address below) or text.

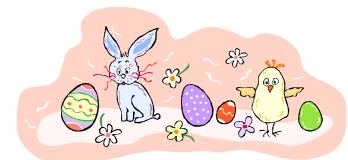
Good Luck!

Unfortunately our current round of funding is coming to an end at the end of September 2013. In order get beyond September we need to radically rethink how we keep the service going. We believe that we offer a good service and we hope you do too.

Whilst we shall continue to seek funding from other sources we also need to look at private funding such as a membership scheme and we wondered what your thoughts would be on such a scheme. Please phone, email or write to us with your thoughts on how a membership scheme could work, would you consider £50 pa an acceptable level of payment? Too much? Too little?

Your thoughts will enable us to build a sustainable and acceptable model for the future. Thank you

Happy Easter



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