

Newsletter November 2009

The winter weather now seems to be upon us after a better than expected end to the summer. The stormy weather we have had often presents us with the odd case of staggers in lactating cattle at grass. Supplementary feeding is certainly advised.

This month we see the departure of Jim on his epic voyage across the Atlantic. For those of you who have not heard, Jim and his friend Paul are attempting to row their two-man boat from the Canary Islands to the Caribbean. He estimates (hopes) it should take them around two months to complete, we hope to see him back some time in the New Year. They are raising money for FARM-Africa, this is an international non-governmental organisation that aims to reduce poverty in eastern and South Africa. They work in partnership with marginal farmers and herders, helping them to manage their natural resources more effectively and build sustainable livelihoods on their land. If you would like more information then take a look at their website; www.theatlanticvets.co.uk, on which there is a link to make a donation.

Jim's departure necessitates the arrival of Rob Cocking, to fill his boots! Rob is an Australian Dairy farmer's son, he grew up on their family farm outside Melbourne, and so he knows first hand the difficulties facing livestock farmers on a day-to-day basis. After learning his trade back home, he is having a look around the World, including spending a winter in Somerset. We are sure Rob will quickly settle to the daily grinds of TB testing although I suspect the Australian approach would be slightly different to our own, no doubt a topic of discussion while he is with us!

In association with Dairy Co, we are holding a 'Cow Signals' day on the 10th December by kind invitation of Waldegrave Farms Ltd. This new approach involves a critical evaluation of cow housing by looking at the cows and how they respond to the environment they are in. It is particularly relevant to anyone who values the importance of cow comfort or who is thinking about modernising or expanding their cow housing. We are meeting at the Castle of Comfort on Mendip at 10.15 for a 10.30am start. Please call the Redhill office to book your place.

The inaugural meeting of the North Somerset Rural Business Forum took place on the 20th October, around 70 turned out to listen to Jane King, editor of Farmers Weekly discuss promotion of British Agriculture. The next meeting is on 26th November at Winford Manor, Winford, starting at 7.30pm all are welcome to attend.