**Swimming against the flow!**

Do you ever feel like you’re swimming in the opposite direction to everyone else? I often wonder if farmers feel this way. When most of the country is rejoicing in the hottest summer since 1976, farmers are sweating because of the potential consequences. Christmas is fast approaching when we celebrate the birth of Christ, a life that definitely went against the flow as Jesus' priorities challenged many of the social norms and clashed with the religious leaders of the day. And Jesus’ life didn’t line up with expectations; he came for a purpose…to ultimately give his life.

 **Source: www.patheos.com**

I’ve realised that if you’re a farmer it’s not what you do, it’s how you’re made. I suppose, in the end, the best thing we can all do is just be ourselves and do what we’re made for in life. For me, I’m a vicar; for you its farming, so keep going it’s what you’re made for. Read on to hear from dairy farmer Andrew Roworth from our Farmers Support Team and Matt Raine, sheep farmer and vet from Wright & Morten, about their farming thoughts and what they’re made for!

We wish you a good Christmas season from all in the Derbyshire Agricultural Chaplaincy as we do our best to support you as you swim against the flow. Rev’d Alan Griggs, Rev’d Stella Mills, (Agricultural Chaplains) & Emily Brailsford (Chaplain to Young Farmers). We hope you enjoy the following items.

If you need to get in touch with any of the team please contact 07710 088972 or 01629 828460.

**Good News…A new Chaplain to Young Farmers joins the team.**

The Derbyshire Agricultural Chaplaincy (DAC) welcomes Emily Brailsford to the team as our new Chaplain to Young Farmers and introduces herself below.

Emily says: “I live with my husband and three children in Matlock and both my family and my husband’s family have lived and farmed in Derbyshire for the last few hundred years. More recently though falling milk prices has meant that my husband can’t work on the farm and support a family too. What is a Chaplain to young farmers? I hear you ask. Well, the chaplaincy helps agricultural families through difficult situations, whatever they might be. I am here to work specifically with the younger farming community, to listen to individual need or collective issues”.

Hannah Gregory Campeau from Young Farmers says that "Derbyshire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs' are delighted to be working alongside Emily Brailsford in her newly created role as Chaplain to Young Farmers. Derbyshire are the first Federation in the country to have a Chaplain to Young Farmers offering support not only to members, but any young pe ople in agriculture, that require help, support or guidance. We hope that the good work that we do alongside Emily will inspire other counties to follow suit. We thank the Derbyshire Agricultural Chaplaincy for allowing this to happen."

If you would like to know more about the work of the Chaplain to Young Farmers or think Emily could help in any way call on 07594 088858 or Email: e.brailsford@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk

**When TB strikes, Dairy farmer Andrew Roworth from our Farmers Support Team says “It is at such stressful times that we need the support of family and friends”**

The summer of 2018 will be remembered as one of the hottest and driest on record. It has been compared with the summer of 1976, my memories of that year as a school boy at secondary school puts 2018 a close second. But just as 1976, this summer has also had a massive impact on all farms, especially dairy farms, and especially for those who rely heavily on grazed grass. There were two months of the summer where grass growth was virtually zero. This has had a massive impact on farm finances with the cost of forage, if available, straw and concentrates all rising sharply. Thankfully milk prices have been reasonable and fairly stable but because of the weather, what looked like a very profitable year, a year to rebuild balance sheets, has not quite materialised. Needless to say the dry hot summer has not been all bad news. Forage quality is good if quantity is down, but thankfully with the late summer rain and open Autumn these forage shortages are not as severe as they might have been. Milk yields have been good, arable crops and foraged maize have performed surprisingly well. So in the end, 2018 from an agricultural point of view and especially a dairy farmer’s view will go down as a reasonably good year.

This year, as in fact every year, in different ways reminds us how dependent we are on the weather, something completely out of our control. This summer on our farm, something else completely out of our control has reared its ugly head, namely TB. Thankfully we have had one clear test and hope and pray that by Christmas we can trade again. Nobody knows unless they’ve had a TB breakdown how stressful it can be, the uncertainty and the financial implications. So along with the weather and TB, 2018 has been an interesting year. It is at such stressful times that we need the support of family and friends. It is important that we all have somebody we can share our troubles with. As farmers we can be very self-reliant but I would encourage anybody who is struggling with stressful situations to share with somebody, whether it be a family member, a friend or from the Agricultural Chaplaincy. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to Andrew directly please feel free to get in touch by calling 07710 088972

**Matt Raine from Wright & Morten Vets writes about sheep, “Don’t let them fool you”**

Sheep are often given a bad reputation for being stupid, and having little ambition for living. In my experience, the reality is very different. Sheep can be clever, calculating and even quite devious. Every winter on our farm at home, as for most farms, feeding pregnant ewes comprises a large part of the day. It’s at this time of year that the cunning, scheming and downright vicious side of a sheep rears its head, and there are few breeds better at inflicting pain than the Swaledale. That is a fact spoken from experience. For most of the year Swaledales are renowned for staying distant, not willing to be interfered with, but come mid-winter, their stomach overrules: they become savage creatures who will do anything for food, ideally armed with two pointy horns.

At the first sign of a quad bike the 400 ewes swarm from across the 600 acres of fell, whatever the weather. No matter how fast you drive, they keep up and stalk your every move. Once they catch up, the nominated ewe makes the lunge- throwing herself into your path, forcing you to slam on the brakes or face running her over. This gives the rest of the group chance to swarm the bike and trailer. A few will squeeze themselves into the space in front of the trailer, others will climb into the footwells of the quad, and the rest will form an impenetrable circle around you. The attack only gets worse once you leave the safety of the quad, with your knees becoming the victim of constant spearing of horns. If you’re lucky, you manage to stay stood up, but getting flattened under the masses is not unusual.

Despite the attacks and frustration experienced each day, we go back, day in, day out and do it all again, whatever the weather. Farming and vetting {not only farm animals} are similar in a lot of ways. In no other job would you tolerate such risk or injury, in horrible weather and at all sorts of unsavoury times of the day. No one in their right mind would choose a job where you might be up all night in the middle of January in a muddy shed getting covered in goodness knows what… would they ?

**And finally a few news items which might be of interest:**

1. **A warm invitation to this year’s Carol Service at the ABC on Sunday 2nd December 2018 at 2.30pm in the Main Store** **Ring**: For more details please call Alan on 07710 088972 or Robert Walker on 01629 636545.
2. **ACF Carol Service on Saturday 8th December at 7.30pm in Darley Dale Methodist Church.** All welcome.
3. **Beef Farmer in Sheldon looking for someone to help one afternoon a week.** For more details call Alan on 07710 088972
4. **Bamford Rural Social Group:** at Bamford Methodist Church, Hope Valley S33 0AT on the third Friday of each month from 1.30pm to 3pm. Contact Alan on 07710088972 or Rachel Metcalfe on 01629 810903.
5. **Boylestone Rural Social Group:** Meeting the fourth Thursday of every month at Boylestone Methodist Church, Boylestone. Contact Alan on 07710088972 or Rachel Metcalfe on 01629 810903. There are other groups around the county at Hartington and Ashford in the Water.

**Some items for sale:**

1. **IAE, Sheep turn over crate,** never used being barn stored, buyer collects, tel. Joan on 07936 174313
2. **Five front weights, for a 6600 Ford Tractor**, buyer collects, tel. Joan on 07936 174313
3. **A pair of Tanco loader brackets.** To fit International 784. Contact Eric on 07833 706935

\*Please note the Derbyshire Agricultural Chaplaincy aims to connect buyers with sellers only and does not take any responsibility for transactions made.

Nov 2018