

Your Chairman's Concerns

Following our last "Gate" your Committee have been much taken up with the way forward as mentioned in our June edition. Many members have met me around the shows and suggested that they still would like the Association to continue. They all understand that a number of people want to join us but so far nobody has made any effort to offer their assistance as far as I am aware.

As I indicated in June the Committee have just met and spent much time and thought as to how we can move forward. One suggestion was that as Reaseheath have taken on many of our roles they would perhaps be interested in supplying practical assistance or even becoming a partner in our work. I have already approached the Principal and am waiting a date to see and discuss the situation with him.

Secondly, if that does not work, we have to come up with a practical answer to the lack of voluntary support in running our courses and evenings. It has been decided therefore that the subject will be mentioned at each meeting with a request for help, and I will be raising it at the evening lectures for the next three months. If no practical answer appears by the end of November, the January 2010 meeting will need to discuss a proposal that in accordance with our Rules the Association should be wound up in the following three months. The relevant notices will be issued to all members at the time.

I would emphasize that there are no financial problems and if we do not continue your Committee intends that all members will be refunded their current annual Subscriptions. So please keep your contributions coming in.

I am sorry to raise this matter again, but if you will refer back to your old "Gates" you will see my predecessor regularly raised the problem and it is now clear that without an introduction of new Committee blood there is no way we can carry on--- every Committee member does not like this final approach but we can see no alternative at the moment.

My best wishes to you all, Arthur T. Green. President and Chairman.

Lectures

28 September at Reaseheath - Pigs

Frank Miller from Whixall, a very experienced breeder gives us the benefit of his experience.

Doors open 7.30 for 8pm start. Entry £2. Notice board for ads, sales table, Tea and coffee available. Room L3/L4 The Leverhulme Centre, Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DF. Come early and have a chat.

Lectures - Continued

26 October - CSA Annual General Meeting and Organising the Cheshire Show

Nigel Evans, Chief Executive of Cheshire County Show will be telling us how it all works.

It is also our AGM and Arthur has promised lots of unusual prizes for the raffle (proceeds to Send Cow). This is your chance to come and give your views on the future of the association so please come along as there is a significant danger that we will have to wind up the association if there is insufficient support.

23 November - Going Going Gone

Auctioneer, senior partner C Gwyn Williams from F R Marshals (Chelford) gives us the tips on buying and selling.

25 January - TBA - We are trying to get a speaker on what paperwork needs to be done to set up a smallholding with the different official organisations. Keep looking at the web site: www.cheshiresmallholders.org

Future Courses

I have a lecturer for the **Pig Butchery** course but have not got anyone to organise it. If you can spare a few hours to help with the organisation please contact me on 07773780722.

Lamb Butchery - The overflow from the course in February will be running on the 26 September.

We need volunteers to help organise courses so please contact me on 077737807822 if you can volunteer a few hours.

Dates for your diary

Always check with the organisers before making arrangements or travelling as shows are sometimes cancelled, often at the last minute! Links to web sites are on www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk/news.htm

Nantwich Food and Drink Festival - 25- 27 September see: www.nantwichfoodfestival.co.uk

Cheshire Ploughing and Hedge Cutting Competition - Wed 30 September at: Agden Brook Farm, Lymm Road, Little Bollington. WA14 4TE. www.cheshireploughing.co.uk

Rare Breeds Survival Trust - Quiz and Hot Pot Supper - Sat 24 October 19:30 at Toft Cricket Club Nr Knutsford. Tickets £8.50 purchase in advance from Ruth on 01925 266208.

Activity Report

Barbeque

The rain stopped at 5:00 and the sun came out to give us a glorious evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Many thanks to Gill for providing the venue, Kim for providing trout and Gill's son Josh for cooking.

Silverware success at Mottram Show 2009. Congratulations to Tony and Gill.

Tony and Gill Moore's Ryeland ewe lamb, Pillmoss Lizzie, stole the show in the Ryeland Breed section at the Mottram & District Agricultural Society's annual show on 16th August when she won the Sam Kennerley Cup for best Ryeland lamb. She then went on to win the Daniel Kennerley Silver Shield for best Ryeland entered in the show, against the winners from all the other Ryeland classes, including Ram, Shearling Ram, Ram Lamb, Ewe, Shearling Ewe and Ewe Lamb.

She didn't make it to 'Best in Show' position against the 5 other champions from the breeds present, (Texcel, Swaledale, Gritstone, White Faced Woodland, and AOB (Blue Faced Leicester)), which was taken by the Texcel.

Tony.



Creep Hurdles

Some of you will be pleased to see that my offering this time involves no welding! I have decided however to revert to imperial measurements because that is what I happened to use at the time and conversion to metric would give some silly figures. Soon after I started to keep sheep I decided I needed a creep hurdle. However I had no idea what gap to provide that would allow the lambs through but to keep the ewes out so I decided to make three alternative gap sizes. These would be $6\frac{3}{4}$ ", $7\frac{1}{2}$ " and 8" and I thought that two of each size would give me one hurdle to allow the lambs to get to creep feed in a pen and a second hurdle to allow lambs through a gateway to fresh grass. Consequently I made three hurdles each capable of adjustment to two sizes.

The hurdles are constructed in wood and held together with M5 bolts 140mm long with wing nuts. (No I have not used imperial bolts!) From the drawing attached one can see that the vertical bars are of 2" square section 36" long except at one end where it is 72" long. The horizontal members are of 3 by 2" section and are also 72" long and the diagonal brace is of $2\frac{5}{8}$ " by $\frac{3}{4}$ " section and is also 72" long. Over the parts of each bar which the lambs rub against, I rounded all four corners. The assembly was originally creosoted and over the years the bars have become polished by use. All the holes are drilled 6 mm diameter to provide a working clearance and are in the centre of the 2" width of the vertical and horizontal members.

All the bars are identical so having drilled one it was used as a template to drill all the others. By using a pillar drill it was possible to ensure all the holes were at right angles to the bar. The interesting part comes when we have to drill all the holes for the two alternative gap sizes. The holes in the horizontal members were made again using the pillar drill and the hole positions were according to the table below.

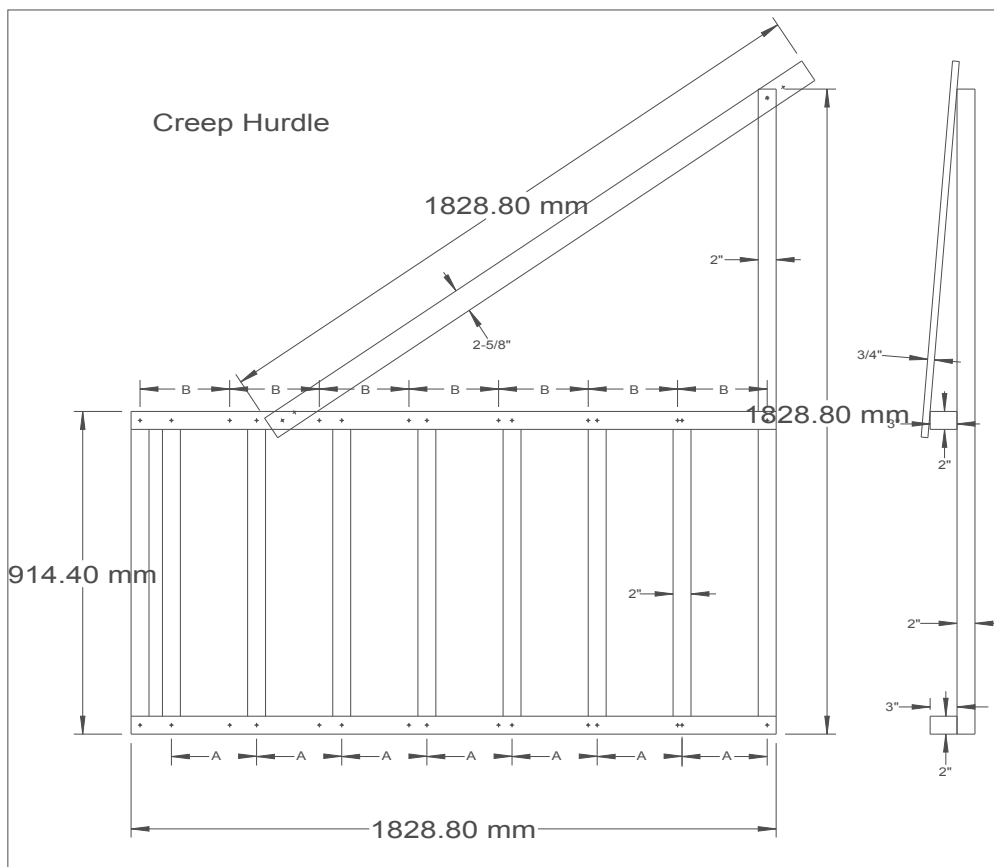
Hurdle number 1 is for $7\frac{1}{2}$ " and 8" gaps so dimension "A" is $9\frac{1}{2}$ " and "B" is 10".
Hurdle number 2 is for $6\frac{3}{4}$ " and $7\frac{1}{2}$ " gaps so dimension "A" is $8\frac{3}{4}$ " and "B" is $9\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Hurdle number 3 is for $6\frac{3}{4}$ " and 8" gaps so dimension "A" is $8\frac{3}{4}$ " and "B" is 10".

In addition to the 72" vertical bar all hurdles need 8 of the 36" bars. However when assembled for 8" gaps, hurdles 1 & 3 each have a surplus bar. When hurdles 1 & 2 are assembled for $7\frac{1}{2}$ " gaps there has to be an unusable gap as shown to the left side of the drawing.

Drilling the diagonal brace requires one or two holes in odd places and I have not bothered to dimension these. The three requirements for positioning the diagonal are 1) that it holds the vertical bars at right angles to the horizontal bars, 2) that it should not prevent access to the wing nuts securing the vertical bars and 3) they should not impede too far into any gap. The fact that the diagonal brace does not lie flat has not been a problem.

In order to keep the hurdles in sets I have put a blob of paint on each component using Black, White and Red paint to distinguish between the three hurdles.

My experiment with gap sizes has been interesting. I have the Derbyshire Gritstone breed of sheep and I have found the $7\frac{1}{2}$ " gap the most successful. The lambs quickly out grow the $6\frac{3}{4}$ " gap and some of the adult ewes, especially just after shearing, can get through the 8" gap.



Docks

I have a continuing problem with docks in one of my fields. I have a competition with one of my neighbours (organic) to see which of us can grow the largest docks and he always wins as he manures his. Yes I know I should cross graze but that is a difficult option so I prefer to follow an even more difficult path.

I have tried topping on a regular basis but have found that the wily pests then grow horizontally just below the height of the topper and then go to seed very quickly.

I have also tried spot spraying with chemicals Grazon 90 and Glyphosate. Glyphosate works well but does kill all the grass around the dock. Grazon 90 instructions say that established docks will need to be treated over two years but I have found this is not very effective. A routine which appears to work is: Spot spray with Grazon 90 and a few days later go around spraying any that are not wilting as these are the ones I have missed. Then a couple of weeks later spot spray again this time doing the little pests that are showing signs of recovering. On a few really persistent ones spot spraying again a few weeks later will get them. I would like to be able to say that I no longer have any docks but they keep on coming back, probably from seed, although they are getting fewer. Any alternatives always considered, apart from cross grazing, let me know.

Kevin.

Influenza A virus subtype hemagglutinin protein 1 neuraminidase protein 1

Swine Flu update.

Scientists in Mexico have announced what is considered a very serious development to the current pandemic - that swine flu has now mixed with Bird Flu to produce an even more virulent strain. British scientists have been reported as saying that they are confident that they will be able to find a vaccine for the new strain as soon as pigs can fly.

I called the Swine Flu hotline ... all I got was crackling.

I heard that the first symptom is that you come out in rashes.

Another is that you get the trots.

But, I woke up with pig tails this morning Should I be worried?

The doctor asked me how long I'd had the symptoms of Swine Flu. I said it must have been about a Weeeeeeeeeeeeeek!

Apparently my mate's got Swine Flu, I think he's just telling porkies, though.

The only known cure for Swine Flu in humans has been found to be the liberal application of oinkment.

Swine flu, however, is not a problem for the pigs because they're all going to be cured anyway.

News Flash this just in. The world's religious leaders have issued a joint declaration that the Swine Flu pandemic is the start of the aporkalypse.

I just heard on the news that, "Swine Flu could potentially be a threat to every single person in the world". Well it's a good thing I'm married then, isn't it?

This is not a time for panic. It is no pig deal. It is a mild hamademic, don't believe the spam you're getting.

Half price on return flights to Mexico - it's not like you're coming back, is it?

You've got to hand it to the Mexicans. Even Osama Bin Laden didn't scare this many Americans.

Go on smile, that is even more contagious than swine flu.

Swine Flu in Pigs

DEFRA have issued a Code of Practice document for pig keepers on how to minimise the risk of introducing H1N1/09v (Swine Flu) to pig herds and how to minimise the spread should your herd be affected. See:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/atoz/swine-flu/documents/cop090803.pdf>

A herd in Northern Ireland has been reported to be infected with the human form of the virus, this is the first confirmed in Europe (18 Sept)

SPS Payment - Minimum Size Set

DEFRA have announced the result of the consultation mentioned in the last issue of Gate. The minimum size for claiming under the Single Payment Scheme has been set at one hectare. This is the minimum allowed under EU rules. The objective farmer test will not be implemented. This is subject to detailed EU scheme regulations and any further clarifications from the EU commissioners.

It is claimed that each payment under SPS costs £2,000 to administer. As the payment for each hectare is approx £96 this means that the cost of administering a payment for less than 20 hectare (500 acres) is more than the payment.

Recently a root and branch review of the Rural Payment Agency has been announced. Katrina Williams, director general of DEFRA's Food and Farming Group, will chair the review

Avis goes to the Palace

Avis and John Shaw (CSA founder members) were invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace on behalf of the Rare Breeds Trust. This coincided with the storms over London so everyone got very wet. On leaving the Palace Avis and John were put onto London busses free of charge to try and help get them away from the torrents of water.

Competition

We will provide a completely worthless prize for the most humorous caption for this photograph. Send your entries to the editor by the end of November in time to have your efforts laughed at in the December Gate.

The editors decision will be final unless someone can offer sufficient inducement.



Other Stuff

Gate

The next Gate will be produced in December. Please send me any articles, pictures, adverts etc for the next issue by the end of November 2009 (phone 07773780722 for email address).

Web Site

(www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk)

If you have any articles or adverts for the web site let me know, pictures of your activities always welcome. I will continue updating the web site so keep on looking at it for latest news.

Membership Subscriptions are due NOW.

If you have not set up a standing order please send your renewal cheque for £10 to Lawrence or give them to him at the September meeting.
Mr L. Beard, Heyshead Farm,
Hedgrow, Pott Shrigley, SK10 5DA

Please put your postcode on the cheque so we can know who you are.

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Selected Charity

Our charity is Send A Cow which provides training, animals, trees and seeds for families in Africa. This enables them to become self sufficient. Have a look at what they do at www.sendacow.org.uk to see where they spend our contributions.