

NEWSLETTER

WELSH LAMB & BEEF PRODUCERS LTD NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2 November 2011 @ 2.30pm

Annual General Meeting of Members

The Annual General Meeting of members will be held at the Stapleton Building, IBERS Plas Gogerddan, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion on Wednesday 2 November 2011 at 2.30pm

Yours faithfully
GM Jones, Secretary

AGENDA:

1. To receive the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
2. To receive the Chairman, Richard Howells' Report,
3. To receive and approve the accounts for the year to 31st March 2011*
4. To appoint directors – Messrs Richard Howells & Wyn Williams retire by rotation and being eligible, offer themselves for re-election**
5. To elect Whittingham Riddell as Reporting Accountants

* Copies of the annual accounts are available on the society's website www.wlbp.co.uk or for a hard copy, please write to or telephone WLBP at the above address

** If you wish to make a nomination to the board, please forward the name & address of the member to the society at the above address by 31 October 2011 together with the name, signature and Membership No of six other WLBP members supporting the nomination.



Holding Numbers still needed urgently

Although we have requested that all members provide us with a list of all of their holdings, we are still having problems with some farmers entering stock into an abattoir that has come from a holding that is not registered with the FAWL scheme, even though the main holding itself is recorded as farm assured. Abattoirs check our website of FAWL members daily and have not been prepared to accept stock from an unregistered holding as farm assured and have penalised a number of members.

We strongly urge you to tell us about all new holdings you may acquire (even if only on a temporary basis) or ones that may not be currently covered so as to avoid any problems in future and to make sure that you do not lose out because your stock has been downgraded as non-farm assured.

New FAWL Standards launched

The new FAWL Producer Manual is enclosed with this newsletter. It includes revised standards and is the first full revisions to the standards since the previous version was introduced in 2008. The new standards will be implemented on assessments that are allocated to take place after 1 December 2011. We would encourage all FAWL members to read them before their next assessment, whenever that may be.



The standards come in three sections focusing on (1) Food Safety, (2) Animal Health & Welfare, and (3) Care for the Environment. They reflect changes in regulations and legislations that have taken place since the last issue. Most of the standards remain the same, although the environment section has been re-written to reflect the guidance provided by the new Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the protection of Water, Soil and Air introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government in the spring.

There is greater emphasis on farm bio-security, especially for incoming livestock but we are confident that FAWL members follow good practice in any event and can readily meet the new requirement. For example, farmers will be asked to show how they minimise the risk of the spread of disease for brought in replacements and store stock, tack animals and bulls or rams hired or purchased. An even greater priority has been given to good biosecurity practice by the Welsh Government and consequently, WLBP believes that we need to rise to the challenge.

The idea of recommended standards has been introduced for the first time: these are not a full requirement of the FAWL scheme but matters we would hope that members would take up and support.

It's appreciated that farmers are extremely busy and often find it difficult to complete paperwork. In order to try and help alleviate some of the pressures, we have also enclosed a booklet entitled The FAWL Scheme Management Record Book. The booklet includes in one place a number of the plans or records that are required by the FAWL scheme. No farmer has to complete the booklet and is free to prepare such information in whatever other form is convenient to them but a number of farmers have asked us to help by preparing pro-forma or examples as further guidance: we hope that those that wish to use it will find the booklet useful.

WLBP has encouraged farmers to be proactive in developing animal health plans and encouraged greater co-operation with the farm's vet. It has been shown that the benefits of a good health plan can outweigh the costs irrespective of whether it is a requirement of any assurance scheme. The health and biosecurity plan are more than adequate for the FAWL scheme and can support a focus on improving the health of farmed animals.

Please note that a Crop Protection Record Section has been included for the first time because of the requirements of the new Code of Good Agricultural Practice.

Are you an eligible business that can claim 80% of the cost for the veterinary mentoring service? (up to £500 per day for up to five days)

Welsh Lamb & Beef Producers Ltd is an approved contractor to help deliver Animal Health and Welfare mentoring for farmers under the veterinary mentor option of Farming Connect's Whole Farm Plan.

Farming Connect is an integrated, high profile, service for farming families in Wales. It is funded through the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 and is financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The service offers a range of services which are fully funded and partially subsidised. In order for you to qualify for the subsidised funding you will need to be registered first with Farming Connect. WLBP is working with vets across Wales that have been approved to deliver animal health and welfare advice on their behalf.

The following vet practices have vets approved to deliver mentoring under the Farming Connect service via WLBP:

Afon Vets, Neath
Farm First Vets, Abergavenny
Honddu Vets, Brecon
Maesglas Vets, Bridgend
Market Hall Vets, St Clears
Fenton Vets, Haverfordwest
Castle House Vets, Newcastle Emlyn
Steffan Vets, Lampeter
Davies & Potter, Lampeter
Dolgellau Vets Ltd, Dolgellau
Camlas Vets, Welshpool
Milfeddygon Deufor, Pwllheli
Bennet-Williams Vets, Gaerwen,
Anglesey
Kate Burnby, Independent Veterinary
Consultant, Cheshire
Williams Vets, Tywyn
Cain Vets, Llansanffraid
Four Crosses Vets, Llanymynech
Aeron Vets, Ciliau Aeron, Lampeter
Oak Vets, Clarbeston Road,
Haverfordwest

Allen & Partners, Whitland
Ddole Road, Llandrindod Wells
Bodrwnsiwn Vets, Anglesey
Daleside Vets, Wrexham
Hafren Vets, Newtown
Hay Vets, Hay-on-Wye
Kate Hovers, Vet Consultant,
Trecastle
Park Vets, Cardiff
Priory Vets, Cardiff
Pro Stock Vets, Carmarthen
St James Vets, Swansea
Teilo Vets, Llandeilo
Trefaldwyn Vets, Montgomery
Tysul Vets, Llandysul
WT Pritchard the Vet, Denbigh
Ystwyth Vets, Aberystwyth
Carmarthen Veterinary Centre
Bush House Vets, Llandeilo
Fishguard Vet Services
Welsh Regional Veterinary Centre,
Gelli Aur, Llandeilo

Each vet has individual rates and packages to offer farmers as part of the service and you are therefore advised to contact individual practices in order to obtain quotes and advice as to what's on offer to you from them once you have registered and had approval from Farming Connect that you qualify for the funding.

Eligible businesses will be able to claim 80% of the cost (up to £500 per day for up to five days) for the veterinary mentoring service.

If you would like further information regarding the service call Farming Connect on 08456 000 813 or email farming Connect at farming.connect@wales.gsi.gov.uk or contact WLBP directly and we will register you for the service on 01970 636 688 and ask for Iestyn Tudur-Jones.



E-mail addresses



In future, we will be encouraging members to provide us with their e-mail addresses as we move to try and minimise the ever increasing costs of distributing information by post. We hope over time to be able to use e-mails as our primary way of contacting our members and believe that it will make a significant contribution to keeping our costs down.



WLBP Website



We plan to launch a new website in 2012 that will enable members to keep all their Herd and Flock Records on-line and facilitate the completion of Movement Records as well. It is planned to provide direct access to the British Cattle Movement Service as part of the website which will also have the capability that enables members to keep their Medicine Records as well if they so wish.



Farm Inspections



It is likely that the number of inspections that members of officially recognised farm assurance schemes such as FAWL have to face will be reduced in future as the authorities including the Welsh Government, The Food Standards Agency and Animal Health include membership of such schemes in their risk assessment analysis in deciding which farms to visit. The public sector appears to be developing a more focused approach to their inspection of farm premises and consequently it is hoped that membership of the FAWL scheme will enable our members to have fewer inspections than they might otherwise have.



Whole Life Assurance



Some retailers and meat processors are pressing for a change in standards so that any stock sent for slaughter to be sold to consumers as farm assured should have spent its whole life on an assured farm. While no decision has yet been made and is still subject to consultation and discussion, it could lead to pressure on more store producers in particular to become members of the FAWL and other beef & lamb assurance scheme. However, if this becomes a reality, sufficient notice period must be provided to enable the supply chain to adapt.



Credit Card Payment



WLBP can now accept subscription payment by credit card if you so wish. Please contact the office by phone on 01970 636688 if you would prefer to use this method to pay.



A Reminder



A few members still don't appear to be fully aware that the regulations regarding the tail docking of sheep changed a couple of years ago. Rubber rings or other device to constrict the flow of blood to the tail may only be used during on an animal's first week of its life but when any other method is used, an anaesthetic needs to be administered.



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