

# Your News

Updates from the heart of the industry



CF chief executive Simon Birch (front left) and CF chairman Peter Thomas (centre) receiving their best in class stand award at the Royal Cornwall Show from Alan Lyons, Royal Bath & West show manager and one of this year's judges, as the CF show team look on.

**Autumn 2011**

**Inside this issue:**

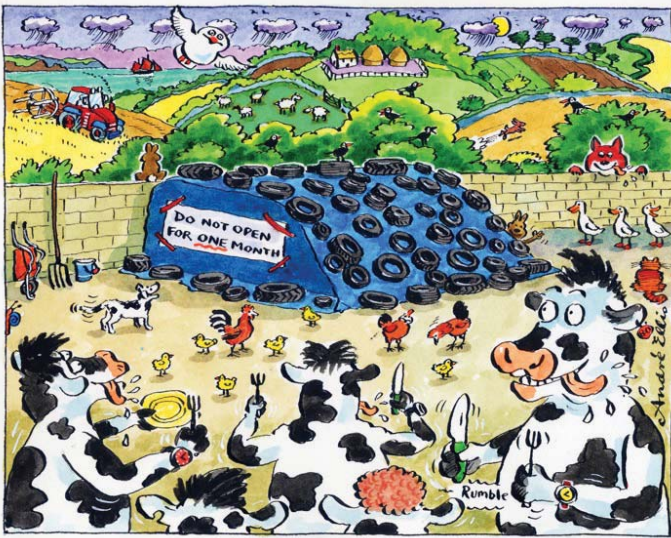
Patience can lead to amazing results!  
Page 2

Autumn control of perennial weeds in grassland  
Page 4

Grass harvest review helps direct reseeding policy  
Page 5

Five steps to beating lameness  
Page 6

# Patience can lead to amazing results!



*Many farms in the south west will be turning their attention to their maize crops in the coming weeks. Maize is a valuable crop, in more ways than one: a useful source of feed for the winter and beyond, but also quite expensive to grow and harvest. This combination of factors makes it very rewarding to try and achieve the best possible use of this crop.*

Timing the harvest is a crucial decision, and before that choice is made and the contractor booked, it is essential to undertake some quick tests of the grass silage beforehand and to consider what role the maize is going to play in the feed ration. If the silage is on the dry side, the maize can be harvested sooner, if the silage is wet, then drier, later-harvested maize would be best.

The ripeness of the crop also needs to be checked carefully. Some of these stay-green varieties actually stay green for too long, so you don't want to harvest the maize too early. A few mistakes were made last year when the cob was ready and the crop harvested, yet the plant itself was still too green. At the same time it can be disastrous to wait too long and the crop becomes sodden by autumn rain, so day-by-day vigilance is the watchword. The ideal time is when the crop is between 32% to 35% dry matter and being slightly too late, is better than harvesting slightly too early.

Optimising the feeding potential of the forage component in the

diet is crucial in terms of margin/litre. Therefore Cornwall Farmers advise the use of DoubleAction Ecocorn on your maize silage, which has been shown to make a real, consistent and economic contribution to achieving this especially with the high yielding cow.

DoubleAction Ecocorn is a combination of an inoculant to efficiently control the initial fermentation and an acid to restrict the potential for aerobic spoilage and dry matter loss during feedout. Both of these aspects contribute to more digestible DM being available to the cow and improvements of around 1.8 litres/cow/day have been obtained from MTD/1 treated silages.

Once harvested, the temptation is always there to give the herd immediate access to the maize clamp, yet the fact is the optimum period of fermentation in terms of starch digestibility is actually no less than four months. That timescale is impractical for many, though some farms are now putting away sufficient maize in the autumn to last through to next year's spring.

Opening the clamp too early also causes further problems by letting air into the pit so the rest of the maize harvest is not as good as it could be. Keeping the clamp closed for a month allows the additive to work, aids fermentation throughout the whole pit and it will keep better over the winter.

For most farms, a minimum fermentation period of 30 days will produce excellent results, particularly if the maize is clamped under Clamfilm or Clingseal products, as well as using additives to aid fermentation. Using additives will also reduce any secondary fermentation, which helps keep the maize a lot better for next spring and summer 2012, if that is the aim.

Last year crops were slow to perform in the clamp and an additive would speed that up to get a quicker fermentation and make it more suitable for use earlier on, but still no sooner than 30 days would be the best advice.

If the maize is fed too early, the milk will improve for the first four days but by day five the yield drops to below where it was before, causing acidosis because it is still fermenting and not completely made. Therefore wait for the crop to ripen, wait for the clamp to ferment and then watch the cows perform.

**For further information please contact Cornwall Farmers' nutritional specialists by calling Matthew Jenkin on 07770 598296, David Passmore on 07901 854463, Blair Vanstone on 07799 773990, Philippa Lohmeyer on 07976 468563 or Daniel Collins on 07796 300447.**

## CF celebrates award success at Royal Cornwall Show

*Cornwall Farmers (CF) celebrated one of its busiest ever Royal Cornwall Shows - and scooped best in class for its trade stand for the second year running.*

The £70 million business, which has been supplying the agricultural community for more than 90 years and is owned by its 4,200 members, created a new-look stand this year to highlight the breadth and depth of its products and experience.

It follows a year of positive change at CF including the appointment of new management and a stronger emphasis on its core agricultural strengths.

CF chief executive Simon Birch said: "We had fantastic feedback from our members and visitors that it was one of our best ever shows.

"We radically changed our stand to reflect the new focus of the business, how we are driving it forward and to show that we're here to stay, so winning an award for the second year running was the icing on the cake. Our agricultural customers are at the heart of everything we do, whether it's on-farm or at one of our country stores, so the show is a great opportunity to say thanks while reaching out to new customers."

CF used its stand to showcase the strengths that have made it a leading agricultural trader across Cornwall and Devon. It also celebrated its close partnership with key suppliers by inviting 17 of them to exhibit within its main marquee.

# Farmer Focus

David and his family have a large beef farm in South Devon. They rear Holstein and Friesian bull calves from 2 weeks of age, all calves are purchased from dairy farms in the south west. The calves are fed twice a day on milk replacer and weaned at 8-10 weeks when they are good strong calves and eating 1-2kg/day of ration.

The calves spend a season at grass, which is when they are fed on CF Pinnacle feeds Beef Finisher nuts on the ground through a snacker. They are fed 3kg/ head/ day. 'We are seeing good performance and good growth rates. The nuts are always cleared up and they work well with our system. We will continue to use them in coming years with our system.' The aim is to then finish the cattle indoors at 16 months weighing 540kg liveweight.



**David Merrin**

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Limited to 40 tonnes/buy now pay September



# New HoofSmart® for healthy hooves

Chris & Carmen Wallis, Lower Ash Farm - Dartmouth. On the use of Ecolabs' new HoofSmart® Bath:

"Previously on our farm we have used Formalin or Copper sulphate in our footbath to try to control digital dermatitis and improve lameness in our herd. We then used an antibiotic as a target treatment for individual cows."

Our Dairy Hygiene Advisor recommended we try HoofSmart® Bath as a weekly footbath and as a local spray for individual cows. We selected a number of cows within the herd that had infection issues. Every milking the selected cows had HoofSmart® Bath sprayed onto the back of the heel.

We have found that this combination of the footbath and the application with a local spray direct on the hoofs have shown dramatic improvements within the herd.

HoofSmart® Bath definitely performs as a direct local spray and as a footbath it is preferable to using Formalin. The blue colouring of the product allows you to see where it has been applied on the heel and



**HoofSmart® Bath**

the thick consistency seems to stick to the hoof. In the footbath, the colouring system tells you exactly when its time to change to a new and fresh solution.

"We think HoofSmart® Bath ticks all the boxes - and is an essential tool for Dairy Farmers to keep lameness under control!"

**Buy 10 get 1 FREE**

**Duchy Cattle Magnesium 20kg**

Limited to 40 tonnes/buy now pay September



**Only £199\***

**CF Duchy Blends Super Beef**

\*minimum 3 tonne bulk order



# Autumn control of perennial weeds in grassland



*Ideal grass growing conditions, where the weather is warm and wet, offers farmers an opportunity to treat problem weeds such as thistles and docks this autumn. If producers didn't manage to spray their grassland weeds in the spring they can do so now, and may achieve even better control. At this time of year, plants are drawing nutrients down into their roots in preparation for winter, rather than directing their efforts upwards to produce seed-heads. This allows the herbicides to work more effectively.*

Perennial broadleaved weeds compete with grass in pasture for light, space, water and nutrients. In some cases, such as thistles, they also present a painful physical barrier to grazing – which is wasteful. At a time when profit margins need to be maximised, optimising output from grass is crucial. Controlling deep-rooted and difficult weeds is an effective and relatively simple way of improving grassland production and utilisation.

## Uniform weed growth

Herbicides such as the broad-spectrum Pastor, Doxstar (for use against docks) and Thistlex (to treat thistles), work best when applied to weeds that are growing uniformly. Spraying a few weeks after cutting for silage or hay or after topping is ideal.

Trials carried out by Dow AgroSciences compared topping and spraying simultaneously, with topping and spraying three weeks later. The results show that allowing time for regrowth gives better results and is kinder to the grass. Where late cuts of silage are taken, weed regrowth will be perfect for spraying two to three weeks later. The plants will all be the same size and, as long as night time temperatures remain above 5oc, they will still be actively growing.

## Autumn treatment

Commercial experience in the south-west shows good control of docks and thistles is possible from autumn treatments. Applications in early autumn, after topping twice in mid to late summer, can give very good results. It can be difficult to judge exactly the right time to treat in spring - the weeds and the grass are growing so fast it is easy to miss the ideal spray window. Much better control can be achieved from spraying in September, as it is much easier to see the weeds at this time of year, which means applications can be targeted more tightly, saving on the amount of spray used.

## Target healthy weeds

Late season weed control can be just as effective as spring applications, as long as the weather holds. In the south-west, autumn weed control in grass will work well certainly during September and maybe even into October. However, it is essential that the plants are at the same growth stage and actively growing – so a few weeks after cutting or topping is ideal. It is also important to make sure the weeds are healthy. It is no good spraying docks that have been shredded by dock beetle, as this will restrict the uptake of herbicide.

Where there is clover in a sward, producers need to weigh up how much grass production they are losing from the weed infestation, against the contribution the clover is making to late season grazing. Where the weeds are very bad it may be worth treating and introducing clover back into the sward later.

**Please contact your local CF salesperson or agronomist for further details alternatively telephone Customer Services on 0845 652 66 44.**



## Topical fertiliser matters

*Autumn application of potash on silage grass will be beneficial at K indexes of 2+ or less. An additional 60kg/ha (48 units/acre) should be applied in a 1 or 2 cut system, or 30kg/ha (24 units/acre) in a 3 cut system, over and above standard RB209 recommendations. This could be applied as MOP or the appropriate amount of slurry or FYM, subject to NVZ rules. Maintaining or improving nutrient status will ensure high yields of nutritious grass next season, in conjunction with the appropriate Yara grassland fertiliser grade.*

Winter cereals require high rates of P&K where straw is baled. Typical removals for an 8t/ha (3.2t/acre) crop will be 67kg/ha P O (54 units/acre) and 83kg/ha K O (66 units/acre). 300kg/ha (2.5 cwt/acre) of a PK product such as Yara's granular compound 0-24-24 or 0-20-30, will cover this requirement. Consider a switch to a spring application of an NPK/S, saving time and money. Yara's Actyva crop programme incorporates this approach, on soil indexes of 2 or over.

Climate change heralds a trend toward wetter winters and drier summers, which will mean more emphasis may be needed

on feeding crops through the leaf. As in 2011, periods of prolonged drought affects the uptake of soil applied nutrient. At key moments in crop development, targeting macro and micronutrients through the leaf, such as contained in the YaraVita range of foliar products, will provide significant economic benefits when crops are under stress.

**Please contact your local CF salesperson or agronomist for further details alternatively telephone Customer Services on 0845 652 66 44.**

# Grass harvest review helps direct reseeding policy

*Aber ryegrass varieties bred at IBERS Aberystwyth University are amongst those offering the best combination of yield and quality on the Recommended Lists and should therefore feature strongly in reseeding plans.*



*With silage making all but over apart from a late third or fourth cut in some cases, September is a good time to review the grass harvest and consider what actions might be required to improve crops in future years.*

So says Andrew Cook of British Seed Houses who highlights a number of factors that will indicate whether fields are performing to their full potential.

“It is not just about the overall quantity and quality of silage that you have made,” he suggests. “It is also about the performance of particular fields, particularly in relation to previous years. It is a good idea to keep a record of the number of trailer loads or bales taken off fields at each cut, for future reference, as a year-on-year decline may well be an indication of a worn-out sward in need to reseeding.”

“There are other indicators that a ley may be in need of renewal, such as slower regrowth’s and a reduced response to fertiliser. Weed grasses are slower growing, and their response to nitrogen is one-fifth of that of modern ryegrasses, so poor performance of a particular field may well be due to a declining proportion of sown species.”

Any shortfall in winter forage stocks, whether quantity or quality, could have costly implications if the only solution is to buy in supplementary fodder or concentrate feed. This, says Andrew, should put the relatively low cost of reseeding into perspective.

“If you are facing a shortage of home-grown winter feed, it is important not just to think about how to bridge the gap in the short term but also to consider how to make your fields more productive in the future. This will almost certainly include renewing some of your leys, and this process should start with identification of those fields most in need of renewal. Performance over the past few months is likely to be the strongest indicator that you have of where to prioritise the investment.

“Whilst pasture renovation may be an option in some circumstance, a full reseed is likely to be the most cost effective solution in most cases. It is then important to select the best available varieties for the purpose, using the independently compiled Recommended Lists as a guide.

“Look for the best combination of yield and quality available, because even within the Recommended Lists there is a big variation between the varieties at the top and the average. The very latest Aber High Sugar Grass varieties, bred in Britain at IBERS Aberystwyth University, deliver on all fronts, with strong options in intermediate and late heading groups and as hybrid ryegrasses as well as perennials.”

**Please contact your local CF salesperson or agronomist for further details on the range of CF Grass Seed Mixtures, alternatively telephone Customer Services on 0845 652 66 44.**



## CQLP Deadweight Market Report

*Healthy demand for beef has prompted strong cattle prices over the summer months with R grade carcasses generally returning over 300p/kg. Good export trade coupled with a high number of cattle being sold during the dry spring has kept domestic numbers tight. Over age steer and heifer prices have been around 15-20p/kg below prime beef. Cull cow numbers have also been short and prices have varied considerably depending on outlet, currently prices are varying between 250-270p/kg and the trade remains promising.*

Finished organic cattle of all ages are achieving premiums of around 40-50p/kg. Lamb producers

have also seen good returns. Early season prices of well over 500p/kg have weakened as the supply has increased but even so base prices being offered in early August are around 400p/kg which is higher than the same time last year. CQLP have had a busy summer attending events such as the Royal Cornwall Show and Sheep SW. Recently over seventy members were treated to an excellent farm walk at Tregondale Farm, Menheniot by kind invitation of successful South Devon cattle breeders Mervyn & Richard Rowe & family.

**For more details about CQLP please see our website or call Sue Hall 01579 349373.**

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# Farmer Focus

*Eric Stidston farms at Thurlestone in Devon. Having graduated from Harper Adams and taken over the tenancy from his father, he is now building up his 150 strong herd of South Devons and working toward pedigree status.*

“Around here you can see that some of the cattle don’t look as good as they should, and I suspect that fluke is a big part of the problem. We have really good grass, but we also have the kind of land that is ideal for the snails that act as the intermediate host for fluke,” he says, “As part of our regime we have always used a branded injection containing ivermectin and clorsulon that treats fluke, worms and external parasites.

“I treat around eight weeks after turn-out, and give a second dose towards the end of the summer. We treat again at housing. I am fortunate with the local abattoirs as they are very good at giving feedback, including any problems with fluke damaged livers. As a result I know that we are succeeding in controlling fluke. We



**Eric Stidston**

also see the benefits of the treatment in terms of healthier looking cattle, reduced finishing times and good market prices.”

## Five steps to beating lameness



*Lameness continues to be a big issue in many flocks. And with the cost of footrot – the primary causes of the disease in UK flocks – standing at £8.38/ewe in treatment and labour expenses alone, there should be plenty of financial motivation to try and get on top of the problem.*

One of the main reasons why lameness continues to be so problematic to deal with is the lack of a practical, manageable disease control protocol. But now a new five-step approach is helping many producers tackle the issue head on.

- Treat clinical cases early. Treating lame sheep as soon as you can brings undoubted financial and performance benefits.
- Vaccinate animals to stimulate immunity. Vaccination with Footvax should be combined with a whole flock approach to reducing lameness. The aim is to raise immunity in the flock as an aid to improving the success of the other steps.

- Quarantine incoming animals. Make sure you separate incoming stock for four weeks. If practical, run these new animals through a footbath and monitor for lameness problems. Buy from a known source that is taking steps to control the disease themselves.
- Avoid transmitting infection at gathering and handling. Every farm is different in terms of their handling set up, so take advice as to the best disease control strategy for your unit. For example, is footbathing practical and ask yourself whether you can improve gathering or holding areas in terms of their infection pressure.
- Cull badly or repeatedly affected animals. Repeated offenders should be culled. If this is not practical accept that it will take you longer to get on top of the problem.

**Stick with it, but by having a long-term plan that you commit to means you will have to do less and less as your lameness problem improves. For further information on beating lameness in conjunction with Footvax vaccination, please contact Cornwall Farmers’ animal health specialist, Hannah Storey on 07766 416829.**

## Addressing the Challenge of Farm Rat control on Livestock Farms

*Keeping on top of rats from early in the winter with a well-planned control programme is the best way of tackling rodent control. The traditional fire-brigade approach needs to be replaced with a structured seasonal programme which takes the greatest possible advantage of rats’ natural behaviour.*

Early winter control is vital to stop rodent populations getting established around the buildings, so you really need to start the first cycle of baiting ahead of your main winter housing period, especially if you’re storing plenty of straights or the maize silage that are particularly attractive to rats. Site baiting containers along the sides of buildings, at the edges of straw stacks and near feed storage areas where rats tend to travel well before you start putting down the bait. This will allow help overcome rats’ natural wariness of new things, so they take up the rodenticide rapidly from Day One. Choose sites close to walls, in recesses and in undergrowth where rats feel safe to eat rather than in the open where they feel far more vulnerable.

Choice of Bait is important to get rapid control. Evidence shows that Neosorex Gold with FORTEC allows faster, more complete and reliable control by:

- Increasing the appeal of the bait to the rodent
- Encouraging Rats and mice to consume more bait sooner
- Making the bait more arresting in the presence of other foods
- Increasing the speed with which a lethal dose of Rodenticide is consumed

Equally, make sure you check the bait containers regularly, topping them up frequently and continuing baiting until all signs of rodent activity cease. Failing to provide sufficient bait over a long enough period for even the least dominant individuals to consume a lethal dose is one of the most common reasons for poor control. Breeding rates mean populations can completely re-establish themselves in little more than a month even with 80% control. Don’t wait until you see them but start another cycle of baiting without delay if you want to prevent the problem escalating.

# The pride of the fleet

The weekend of 30-31 July saw the second annual Cornwall Truck Show held at the Stithians Showground. On display were well over 100 trucks including Vintage, Custom and Modern - all cleaned and polished to a very high standard - with the aim of impressing the judges and winning one of the prestigious trophies.

This year one of Cornwall Farmers' drivers, John Goodchild, based at Truro and has been with CF since 2010, entered his Iveco 12 tonne curtain sided lorry into the world of showing.

John was rewarded for his efforts of over 16 hours of cleaning and polishing his lorry with a Highly Commended trophy in the Flat / Skip / Box Van class.

"I was highly delighted with winning the second place trophy" remarked John, "it was a complete surprise but certainly a great reward for looking after my lorry. I might even enter some of the other local truck shows in the future."



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Only £540

# Investing in your country stores

The team at our Launceston Country Store have been celebrating strong trading growth and have moved on from the threat of closure in 2010.

"We have reviewed the ranges of products stocked at Launceston, which now include an enhanced agricultural offer and a large timber section, and have undergone a store improvement programme and I am very confident for the future," remarked Store Manager David Shadrick.

"The response from our customers has been amazing; this is a local store, run for local people by local staff, we feel as a rural specialist it's vital that we can offer our customers the very best products, advice and expertise."



# Pour-on gets lice-free guarantee

A winter-long lice-free guarantee has been introduced for CYDECTIN Pour On for cattle used within five weeks pre-housing. In addition to restlessness due to irritation, lice infestations can cause production losses, according to Pfizer VPS vet David Bartram.

The main transmission route for lice is cattle-to-cattle. For the guarantee to apply, the treatment instructions for use must be followed fully, and treated cattle must not be mixed with untreated animals. For full details, please ask your usual Cornwall Farmers SQP.

Meanwhile, worming cattle a month or so before housing can also significantly reduce the risk of pneumonia during the winter and pay a growth dividend too, according to SAC beef adviser Dr Basil Lowman.

"Pneumonia is the biggest cause of financial loss and a major welfare problem in beef production," he says. "If it causes just one fatality, then many more animals on the same unit will also be affected, will never recover fully, and will lose money."

"In addition to killing gastro-intestinal worms, a pre-housing dose of long-acting wormer will also kill lungworm. Crucially, the timing needs to allow enough time for dead worms to be coughed up and for lung damage to repair while cattle are still outside and under no stress."

Dr Lowman warns that, while animals may look physically fit, a surprising proportion may be

carrying lungworm at this time of the year. "It really is worth making the effort to treat them in advance of housing," he urges.

While ground conditions allow, extending the grazing season into the autumn can also reduce winter feed costs. However, the pasture worm burden at this time of year can be significant, says Pfizer vet David Bartram.

"A strategy employed by some farmers pursuing maximum growth off autumn grass is to treat cattle in advance of housing with a persistent wormer such as CYDECTIN Pour On," he says. "This is the only pour-on treatment that has an approved dosing guideline to be used up to five weeks before housing with no need to re-treat at housing."

By getting cattle worm-free for up to five weeks while still at grass, it has been estimated by Dr Lowman that growth could be boosted by up to 150g per head per day. Over five weeks, this could amount to an additional 5.25kg live-weight, which at £1.70 a kilo would be worth about £9 per animal, thereby repaying the cost of wormer several times over.

On farms where a pre-housing dose is not practicable, Pfizer's Mr Bartram says a sound option remains CYDECTIN Pour On treatment at housing. To order CYDECTIN Pour On contact your local Cornwall Farmers SQP.



**Robin Webb**

*I am writing this article on the 28th July and harvest has only just got underway. The winter barleys throughout the Wessex trading area have come in surprisingly well with the hybrid six rows yielding commonly 4T/acre and the 2 rows 3 to 3.5 t/acre. Quality is also quite acceptable with mid 60kg/hl on the bushel weights and nitrogens between 1.4 and 1.9 and average screenings so the Wessex region along with probably Scotland will be supplying the maltsters this season. We have taken delivery of several thousand tonnes of Oilseeds*

*already and what a crop! This must so far be the crop of the year with high oils and many farmers reporting around 2T/acre. We are currently loading two oilseed cargoes from the south coast bound for northern Europe. Several farmers have just begun to nibble the early wheats and so far we have heavy bushel weights and very reasonable yields with total crop now expected to reach 15.5mmt. Worldwide forecasts have increased with wheat production now put at 674 mmt and the EU wheat harvest at 137 mmt (similar to last season) and the barley at 54mmt. The Ukraine total grain harvest is up 30% over last season at 51mmt and Russia is experiencing 'back to normal' yields.*

### Now for the markets...

The market has proved remarkably resistant in the face of Eurozone turmoil and US debt concerns. I feel the main dangers to the market lie in the following areas

- 1) Reduced demand caused by poor world economy
- 2) Cheap Black Sea grain
- 3) Better yields throughout the northern hemisphere
- 4) Excellent North African yields

5) Good harvests in Australia and South America this winter

6) Currency swings.

However, should the US corn crop not reach expectations and with a tight world balance sheet this is one to watch.

With Russia back in the export market and selling milling wheat to Egypt and other nations at £10/T below UK feed wheat our markets must be bearish! They are buying back the business they lost last season when they banned exports.

With so many variables influencing the market place and if the physical grain bids show you a reasonable profit then **SELL SOME** and **KEEP SOME**, the advice hasn't changed!

In July, Wessex Grain had their Expansion Open Day with visitors from as far away as Sussex and Cornwall. Adam Henson cut the ribbon on the new stores and we are now able to take in most commodities simultaneously and out load at double the pace, useful when filling ships!

Telephone the grain office for the latest values and advice.

Robin Webb, Wessex Grain,  
Telephone 01963 362989

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[garden.machinery@cornwallfarmers.co.uk](mailto:garden.machinery@cornwallfarmers.co.uk)

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## Your country stores

Country Store	Manager	Agricultural Specialist	Telephone
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Dartington	Richard Timberlake	Peter Timberlake	01803 868220
Hatherleigh	Robin Wonnacott	Robin Wonnacott	01837 810576
Helston	Palfrey Turner	Glenwood Wearne	01326 573351
Holsworthy	Jennie Callow	Phil Cann	01409 255825
Kingsbridge	Alan Noyce	Chris Tucker	01548 857321
Launceston	David Shadrick	David Shadrick	01566 772387
Liskeard	Caroline Hamilton	Roy Lethbridge	01579 343446
Otterham	Paul Burgoyne	Paul Burgoyne	01840 261235
Penzance	Karen Gendell	Paul Jenkin	01736 711884
Tavistock	Louise Latham	Kath King & Simon Curtis	01822 614176
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