

Ruminant newsletter

Summer 2022



Welcome to the summer ruminant newsletter

Joe Bailey, Head of Farming (Welfare and Wellbeing)



I hope this issue finds you well, happy and cooler after the recent heatwave.

It's hard to believe that we are well into the second half of 2022. It's gone by in such a flurry and I am sure some of you are extremely grateful to put some things behind you. Here is hoping the next four months bring more certainty, fewer challenges, more triumphs, and less trauma.

In this edition, we will be talking about consumer advice, new farm photography, and the Defra Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

Sadly, this will be my last newsletter as I am leaving RSPCA Assured at the end of October to take up a new post with an animal welfare trust.

I have had an incredible seven years with RSPCA Assured working with, and meeting, wonderful people who are so dedicated to improving animal welfare and therefore wellbeing - as the two are inextricably linked.

Professionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of you for your continued support and membership - you are helping to make an important difference to the future of farm animal welfare. On a personal level, I am so grateful to those I have met when visiting your farms, offices, and homes, and especially thankful for the time I have spent with you and the gorgeous animals you are responsible for. This has helped to make my time as Head of Farming so rewarding.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me before I leave, and please be reassured that we are planning a smooth transition and a new head of farming will be in place as soon as possible.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, take care, stay safe, and be happy.



Advice for the public on walking in the countryside

With the scorching hot summer many of us have had, you may have seen an increase in members of the public going for walks around or through your farm, or even having picnics in local fields.

Some members of the public may not be used to walking in the countryside and this can be a worry for many reasons - animals escaping through gates that have been left open, litter left lying around, and dogs scaring livestock.

Earlier this summer, we launched a blog with advice on walking in the countryside to help members of the public understand how their behaviour can have an effect on the welfare of livestock and to encourage responsible walking whilst enjoying their outings in the sun.

[Read more](#)



New RSPCA Assured farm photography

We want to say a big thank you to those RSPCA Assured members who kindly let us onto their farms for a day to photograph their animals in order to update the RSPCA Assured image library.

We love promoting RSPCA Assured farms in our marketing campaigns and activity and showing consumers and other organisations your higher-welfare farm animals.

This year, after a two-year hiatus, we now have new images of beef cattle, turkey poults, and sheep. And we were able to photograph great member initiatives in sustainability such as tree planting on farms.

If you'd like your farm to be involved with our image library for stock photography, or you are doing something different then please [let us know](#). **We would love to showcase more of our members' fantastic work!**

Help Defra test their Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

Defra is looking for farmers to help test the next phase of their [Animal Health and Welfare Pathway](#) which is aimed at supporting improvements in farm animal health and welfare. Farmers who keep cattle, sheep and pigs can get funding for a vet or vet-led team to visit their farm and carry out a yearly review.

The testing will be rolled out in phases over the summer until autumn 2022 and should fit alongside daily farming activities. Visits can last up to three hours and vets will offer advice on both the health and welfare of animals as well as on

farm biosecurity.

Defra wants farms to get involved to test how the service works and to identify elements of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway that can be improved. They added: "This is not an inspection and information from this testing won't be used in inspections. Any documents submitted while testing will all be anonymised."

Farms that help to test the review will gain early access to the service and be paid at the standard payment rate:

- £522 for beef cattle
- £372 for dairy cattle
- £436 for sheep

For enquiries about this initiative and to find out if you qualify, email AHWR_enquiries@defra.gov.uk.

[Find out more](#)

Get to know Allan Pearson

Cressida Robinson, Public Relations Manager



This May we welcomed Allan Pearson to RSPCA Assured as our new Regional Assessor Manager. Allan is very familiar with RSPCA Assured having worked for the RSPCA since 1998 as part of the farm animals department team. We are pleased to have someone with Allan's experience on board and asked him some questions about his career and interests so you can find out more about him.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. What's your career background?

I have over 40 years of experience working in UK Agriculture starting with my very first job at a local dairy farm while studying at Lancashire College of Agriculture.

I began working for the RSPCA in 1998 as a Farm Livestock officer monitoring members of our farm assurance scheme. Seven years later I was promoted to Field Operations Manager of the RSPCA farm animals department managing a team of Farm Livestock Officers looking after approximately 4,000 RSPCA Assured members.

As of May this year, I have just started work as a fully-fledged member of the team at RSPCA Assured, moving across from the RSPCA to a new role as Regional Assessor Manager.

So what does your role at RSPCA Assured entail?

I now lead a team of approximately 10 RSPCA field assessors and am involved in continually developing and improving the assessment process. I make sure assessments are carried out in line with all RSPCA Assured policies, SCI (scheme certification body), and UKAS requirements.

What are the main differences between your previous role at the RSPCA to Regional Assessor Manager at RSPCA Assured?

The main difference is that I am more people-focused, managing a team rather than actually personally doing the member visits to check compliance with standards.

What unique expertise do you bring to the team?

Over the years, I have now personally conducted in excess of 3,000 monitoring visits to RSPCA Assured members, across all sectors and at all stages of production in livestock agriculture and aquaculture

My in-depth knowledge of all livestock production systems means that I can work closely with all our assessors to understand industry developments and potential issues. My career background has also given me a very strong understanding of the food supply chain and the importance of farm assurance.

Why are you passionate about farm animal welfare?

Whilst we are living in a changing world and eating habits are changing, for those who still rear livestock it's important to rear these animals in the most welfare-positive way possible, but in a way that is commercially viable.

What have you enjoyed most about your role so far, and is there anything you are particularly looking forward to?

Joining a friendly and supportive team who have helped things run smoothly with the changeover. I am looking forward to having more time to get out with the team and visit member farms.

As we work in the world of farming, something we ask everyone we interview is, 'What is your first memory of a farm'?

Helping at hay time when I was about 10 years old.

If you were a farm animal, what would you be and why?

A ewe as they live (in general) a more natural life.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Going to the gym, walking, and spending time with my family.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Poached egg and smoked salmon, only RSPCA Assured!

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