



devon **DEXTERS**

[www.devondexters.org.uk](http://www.devondexters.org.uk)

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## Devon Dexter Group

### The Committee

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Andrew Perry 07771 542010 Richard Cobb 01404 881330 & Chris Davis

### Winter 2011

Winter is coming upon us rather too quickly after a somewhat disappointing summer, with the onset of winter comes the **AGM** which is to be held on **3<sup>rd</sup> December** and is to be combined with a Christmas lunch at the **Rose & Crown at Calverleigh**. The committee is looking for new volunteers to help organize a program for the next twelve months which will be of interest to everyone. We are enclosing the proposal forms – they have been made easier this year and only require a proposer, in the hope that many of you will be interested in supporting the group. May the committee take this opportunity to wish you a very merry Christmas and Happy and prosperous new year.

**If you would like to be a member of the Devon Group and cannot attend the AGM please send your £6.00 subscription to Bernard Stamp, 11 The Willows, Shillingford St George, Exeter, Devon, EX2 9QS.**

We are looking for ideas for meetings in the future and would like to know what members are interested in. Perhaps some closer links with DASH for 2012 could be arranged and we may be able to share some courses.

Ideas might be:

1. Foot and hoof course from a vet
2. Calving and AI
3. Conservation grazing
4. Small scale DIY haymaking
5. Finishing/Assessing condition for sending to slaughter
6. Common cattle diseases and precautions
7. Hedging, Gating and Fencing

**Please come to the AGM and tell us what you would like to learn about.**

### AGM & Christmas Lunch

We are holding our **AGM** at the Rose and Crown, Calverleigh on Saturday, December 3rd, 2011 we will be serving coffee between 11 and 11.30 and then commence with the meeting.

After the meeting there will be the opportunity to have a Christmas lunch from the 'hot plate' menu with a pudding at a cost of £10.00 or you can order from the main menu.

We will be holding a raffle on the day so all contributions will be gratefully received.

### Sale at Exeter 2011

At the beginning of September we held an inaugural pedigree Dexter sale at Exeter Livestock market. The sale went extremely well with an entry of nearly 50 head of cattle and a top price of £714 for Anna and Patrick Woollard's cow and calf and £570 for their 18mth short legged bull was achieved. It would be great to make this an annual event.

## Red Water Disease – Babesiosis Richard Cobb

Our Vet invited us to attend a Red Water Disease course recently but unfortunately it was cancelled, and has not yet been rearranged. This has prompted me to write a few layman's words to open discussion on the subject.

I guess most people are aware of this serious cattle ailment, but for anyone who isn't, what follows is our experience from a non veterinary viewpoint.

The key point is, if you spot the characteristic signs you need to act quickly, as the disease is already in progress and untreated animals can go down hill very quickly and even die, over a period of hours. Even if the cow recovers the unborn calf may be lost.

As the name suggests the most obvious symptom is that the urine of affected animal(s) becomes red and foamy, becoming darker as the disease progresses. Other signs are high temperature, scouring, general lethargy and dull coat.

The disease is caused by bites from infected ticks. A bacteria carried in saliva of infected tick enters the cow's blood stream. Within a few days of an infected bite the bacteria starts to attack and break down the red blood cells of the affected cow leading to the symptoms noted above. At this point veterinary intervention is urgently needed to isolate and treat. Be warned the medication for this disease has a long meat withdrawal but it seems that calves born on the holding can develop their own immunity.

We have also suffered from red water disease twice, the first time was in a cow that was in calf, in her third trimester, and although the vet was able to save her, because she suffered from such a high temperature her calf died and we had the difficulty of delivering a dead calf which affected her fertility long term. The second case was not caught so quickly and she sadly died a couple of hours after the vet had been and given her the appropriate medication.

When we had the first case, ten years ago, the vet was surprised to see it, as it is a disease linked to tropical climates, but now having had a second case and hearing about Richard's experience, it is something which we all need to be aware of, especially when the cows are out grazing. One does not usually have the time to stand in a field and wait for the cattle to pee!! Our first case was in a cow born on our holding so sadly not all calves develop immunity.

Fiona Miles

## Steak and kidney pie

A great winter warmer and also a good recipe for any Dexter stewing beef left in the deep freeze.

1lb beef skirt/450 g (stewing beef, shin or chuck can be substituted)

4oz/100g ox kidney

1oz/25g flour

2 tablespoons oil

1 large onion chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$  pint/300ml beef stock

2 tablespoons Worcester sauce

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

4oz/100g mushrooms sliced

1 packet of frozen puff pastry

Cut steak and kidney into cubes and put in a freezer bag with the flour and toss until well coated.

Measure the oil into a pan and brown the meat and onion. Add the stock Worcester sauce and seasoning. Bring to the boil cover with lid and simmer for 5 minutes before putting into the simmering oven of the aga for 2 1/2hrs.

add the mushrooms and cook for another 30 minutes until the meat is tender. A conventional oven will do the trick on 190C or use an electric slow cooker overnight or all day!

Put the cooked meat into a pie dish and top with the rolled out pastry. Brush with whisked egg yolk and return to a hot oven for 25 to 30 minutes until the pastry is golden brown.

Top tip! Make up a double amount of the steak and kidney filling and freeze half for another occasion.

## A tale of two bovine adoptions!

It is possible with time and patience to persuade a heifer to adopt a strange calf.

Last autumn we lost one of our older cows several weeks after calving leaving us with the problem of an orphan calf. It seemed worth a try to persuade our show heifer Martina to take the orphan as well as her own newly arrived first calf. The process took about 3 weeks before the orphan calf could be left to his own devices but he soon learnt to tuck in when the other calf was suckling. Martina has successfully reared both calves and has proved the versatility of the wonderful Dexter breed. Notwithstanding that success in the early part of this year our other show heifer produced a dead first calf and rather than let nature take its course we decided to find a replacement calf. This duly arrived in the form of Harriet the Hereford/Friesian cross. The process again took about 3 weeks but has been completely successful. Harriet is now 10 months old and twice the size of the little Dexter!

I am happy to provide full details of how to do this with any interested members.

Marie McGahey