

# UTASS Briefing: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014

## BOG ASPHODEL.

There have been a significant number of lambs affected by Bog Asphodel poisoning, commonly called Saut, during late June and July this year. The effects are quite dramatic and take on the form of severe sunburn visible on the animal's head, ears and along their backs. Later symptoms include losing the ears and blindness. Treatment with antibiotics can save some of them if caught in time. It would seem that the problem has occurred in other areas over recent years. There also seems to be a connection between the reduction in sheep numbers grazing the fells during the later stages of winter and the increase of this particular plant. Natural England include Bog Asphodel as one of their key indicator species when assessing the environmental condition of certain habitat types including blanket bog. We would be interested at UTASS to hear of any outbreaks/deaths as a result of Bog Asphodel poisoning so that we can feed the information into the “bigger picture”. Natural England are unlikely to consider changing the status of Bog Asphodel as a key indicator species unless firm evidence is provided.

## CAP REFORM

Defra have recently sent the August 2014 update to farmers. It gives greater clarity on Greening and confirms a new deadline (21<sup>st</sup> October) for transferring SPS entitlements ready for the Basic Payment Scheme (the name of the replacement scheme for SPS). The definition of an Active Farmer is still not completely clarified (more details expected in October) but it will be possible to transfer entitlements in early 2015 after they have become BPS entitlements at the end of this year. Defra are still working on the rules for Commons and shared grazing but say that it is likely to be based on the allocation of ‘notional area’ based on the rights held which is not dissimilar to the current method.

## UTASS CLOSING DATES.

The UTASS office will be closed from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September through to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September inclusive as there will be building work taking place. Animal movement forms and BCMS information can still be popped through the letterbox and will be processed daily throughout the week the office is closed. For those of you who have children who attend the evening young people’s sessions at UTASS there will not be any sessions between Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September and Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September inclusive. Young people’s sessions should resume on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014.

## TRAINING

Young people wishing to access grants from the Sir Tom Cowie Trust for the following courses 13-16 Tractor; Pre-Test Tractor; ATV; Car or Car & Trailer need to submit a completed application form to UTASS by **Wednesday, 3rd September 2014**. Please contact Julia at UTASS for further information.

For further advice and assistance contact UTASS 01833 641010.

Richard Betton.

