

How much will Obsalim[®] improve the results of your herd?



Obsalim is an observation technique that is used to evaluate the responses of ruminants (cows, sheep and goats) to their ration and housing. Through the observation of a number of signs on and around the animals it is possible by using Obsalim to know exactly what is happening in the rumen. After making such an Obsalim diagnosis it can be decided to make changes to the distribution or composition of the ration, or to the management of the herd in order to improve the efficacy of the transformation of the ration. Further Obsalim observations will determine whether a correction of a ration or a change in distribution or housing was appropriate.

Changes in a feeding pattern, changes in access to food, changes in the composition of the ration, changes in relation to housing or changes made to the type or origin of the ration will affect the herd. Even changes in the composition of the group and changes in the weather can have an influence. This is the reality of farming. Having an easy to use but efficacious tool to monitor the impact of the diet on the animal should lead to increased efficiency in the farm. Such a tool will prevent unnoticed and uncorrected imbalances in relation to feeding from causing losses and disease. This field lab aims to find out how farmers can use the Obsalim cards and what benefits they can achieve with the technique.

The technique of Obsalim was developed and fine-tuned by a French veterinary surgeon through 15 years of trial and error and collating of information. In the last 10 years, the method has proven its efficacy and has gained widespread popularity in France. There is now much interest in Obsalim from other countries all over the world. This field lab is an opportunity for the UK farmers to explore its uses and lead in the evaluation of this exciting new technique.

If the conclusions of this field lab are positive, the Obsalim technique can then become a way to improve both productivity and animal welfare. Such improvements will also help in other fields like reducing the needs for antibiotics. Obsalim is also an excellent platform for discussion and evaluation of herd related issues with vets and technicians.

The first meeting on 15 April 2015, at Berkeley farm in Wroughton will introduce participants to the concept of the Obsalim technique and discuss next steps.

Obsalim is not reserved to the small or the organic farm, any farm keeping ruminants will benefit from its introduction in daily routines.

This field lab is designed for farmers to lead in the research process. Please have a look at the proposals, we hope they will be a step towards making an efficient decision on the shape of the field lab during our first meeting.:

- 1. The acquisition of the technique of Obsalim.**
Learning to use Obsalim is a little bit like learning a new language. In the case of the farmer, much of what Obsalim is based on is already part of routine farm observation and every farmer can learn how to use Obsalim. In this first part the ease with which the technique is appropriated may be considered.
- 2. Developing confidence in the technique.**
Through a number of sessions of addressing real farm situations and comparing the results of changes made following an Obsalim diagnosis we can look at the connection between the Obsalim observations made and real time changes noticed. This should provide participants with the confidence to start managing their herd on a regular basis using Obsalim. We may record changes in signs seen on the animals before and after assessment of the cows during 2 farm visits 14 days apart in a number of farms.
- 3. Assessing the improvements of the herd after a time of regular use of the Obsalim technique in each participating farm.**
In this last part we may be looking at analysing the production and economic benefits when Obsalim has become a tool regularly used. This may be done by analysing the available information in relation to production, illness, fertility and food consumption in comparison to previous year's average of the same period.

A you-tube tutorial is available on how to learn the Obsalim technique. Viewing this tutorial will give you a head start in acquiring the method. A set of cards (£ 25.00) is needed to be able to make your observations. A guidebook (£ 20.00) is helpful to start interpreting the results of your observations and deciding how to make improvements. The cards and guide will be available for purchase during the meetings.

This field lab is an exciting project carrying the promise of a great leap forward in ruminant management. This is a promise carried by the very positive anecdotal evidence already available.

www.obsalim.com/en/index.htm

