



# MEADOWSWEET MATTERS

[www.meadowsweetfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.meadowsweetfarmshop.co.uk)

**NEW!**

Many thanks to John Roberts of Couloir Designs for creating a super website for Meadowsweet Farm Shop. It has details of what's happening on the farm, what events and promotions are running in the shop, details of our suppliers and a quick and easy way of ordering the beef. The pages are updated regularly - you can even read the latest and back issues of Meadowsweet Matters!

## FARM SHOP OPENS!

On 1st May we opened the farm shop. There was a lot to get ready in a short time, but I think we just about managed it. Thankyou to everybody who has come to support us - we really appreciate your custom, especially our "regulars" who come in several times a week. We are open every morning (except Sundays) from 9.30 - 12.30. As well as our own beef, we sell, pork, lamb, free-range chicken, bread, milk, dairy products, jams, newspapers, stamps, fruit, vegetables and lots more. If you haven't yet been, please pop along - we'd love to see you.

**Shop now open late night on Thursday 3.30pm - 7.00pm.**

For those who are at work in the day we're now open one evening so that they can come to us after work and stock up ready for the weekend.

## A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY...

Our next lot of beef will be ready on

**SATURDAY  
22ND AUGUST**

We can deliver to you if you are unable to get to the shop. Boxes can be ordered from our website: [www.meadowsweetfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.meadowsweetfarmshop.co.uk), or send us an email: [meadowsweetbeef@btinternet.com](mailto:meadowsweetbeef@btinternet.com) give us a ring 01295 730668 or ask in the shop.

## View from the farmyard

Has the credit crunch hit Meadowsweet Farm? Well, currently we could sum up farming as like the curate's egg: good in parts! Beef and lamb prices are up considerably on previous years, probably driven by a weak pound allowing more exports of UK produce and making imports more expensive. The cereals outlook is not so good: prices had been holding up quite well but have now crashed by £30 - £40 / tonne for wheat. This is disastrous news just before harvest as the crops have been grown using very expensive inputs particularly Nitrogen fertiliser. Let's hope for some more hot weather in July and August so at least it will be easier to harvest unlike the last two years.

Despite the clouds, the weather improved and we made some great hay at the very end of May. Because it was cut so early the grasses were full of sugars, as they had not yet put their energy into flowering. Consequently we made a super lot of hay, albeit a bit light. We cut 3 other fields at the end of June and again the weather was kind to us. One more field is yet to cut and we're going to experiment with big bale silage on this one. It's easier to make as it doesn't need such a long spell of dry weather and it can be stored in bags outside. Let's hope the cattle like it as much! We'll let you know in the next issue.

**HAY AND STRAW FOR SALE**

SMALL BALES OF GOOD QUALITY HAY OR STRAW FOR £3 PER BALE. Please ring or email for more details.



Martin mowing the Spring field in May to take an early cut of hay.

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# FARM SUNDAY – June 7th

Listening to the rain pitter-pattering down all the previous night, it was surprising Farm Sunday went ahead at all!

But at 10 O'Clock, the rain stopped and the sun came out. The terrible weather did put some people off, but despite being a little damp underfoot, we went ahead and had a great morning. Tom's kittens were a big attraction as were the racing piggies brought along by the Environment Agency. Visitors also had a chance to look at displays by the RSPB including an opportunity to see what the local owls have been eating by dissecting their pellets (regurgitated bones and skins of small mammals). After that Martin took visitors on a farm walk where they looked at the crops growing and ask questions about the cattle grazing nearby. A big thankyou to Katy and Cristoph Cheshier for doing sterling work on the barbeque. We'd had some of our beef made into beef burgers, so when people returned from their walk they'd built up an appetite. We also opened the shop to show what was on offer. A good time was had by all, but will we be up to it again next year.....



## FARRINGDON, FILKINS, BURFORD PLOUGHING MATCH

We went to this last September and it was such a lovely day we thought we'd let you in on it. Where else can you see dozens of heavy horses at work, vintage and modern day tractors, a threshing machine in action and live music. There was also a handicrafts section with beautiful cakes, home made wines etc and lots of competitions for children. The Ploughing Match takes place on 26th September at Macaroni Farm, Eastleach, Fairford, Gloucs. To pick up a programme contact the secretary Megan Saunders on 01993 851139.

## Another rare find

In July we found a new species of orchid on the farm. This time it was a bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and in a completely different part of the farm from the common spotted and marsh orchids. Orchids have a complex life cycle because they live in a symbiotic relationship with mycorrhiza (a soil-dwelling fungus). In the UK it has a distinct western preference being more common in Wales where it is often found on sand dunes. In some countries the plants have protected status. They are unusual in that in some years they appear in great numbers, then sometimes only reappear after an absence of many years. This is the first time we've spotted this orchid in this particular field so how it came to grow here is a mystery.



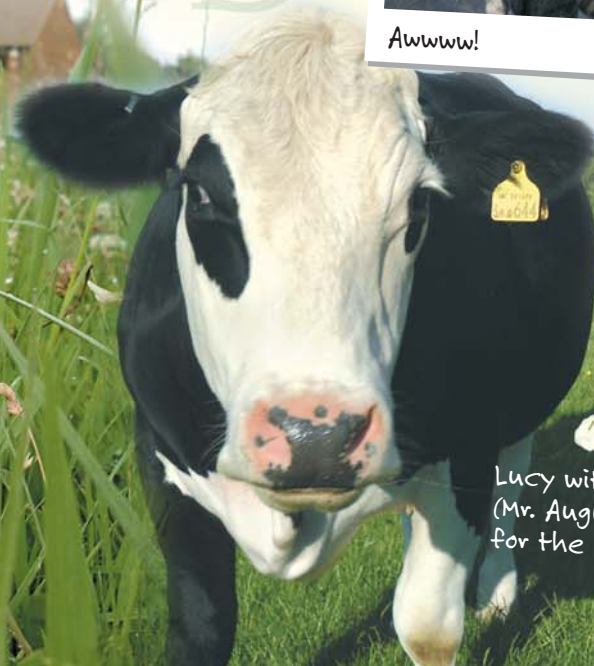
*Ophrys apifera*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO TOM

on the birth of her 4 kittens! On 19th May at 5 in the morning Tom gave birth to Nutmeg, Minerva, Rosie and Tom Kitten - on the kitchen sofa despite not being allowed in the house.... After a few weeks, they went to live in the barn and were soon scampering about on the bales. New homes have been found and Tom has now been spayed so unless Nutmeg surprises us, there shouldn't be any more kittens.



Awwwww!



Lucy with photogenic "Patch" (Mr. August...) - a Hereford X steer posing for the camera on Farm Sunday



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