

# Useful Herbs for Farmers

In an ideal world every field should contain medicinal and preventative plants.

## Key plants to include in a medicinal paddock include:

- Birdsfoot Trefoil - contains condensed tannins so helps with parasite control and bloat.
- Chamomile - emotionally calming and is anti-inflammatory both internally and externally, helps with digestion
- Chicory – contains tannins which attach to proteins making the gut inhospitable for parasites
- Chickweed – also soothes skin externally and acts to support digestion when consumed
- Cleavers – or sticky willy/ goose grass, rich in minerals it supports the lymphatic system and so is especially useful after illness
- Coltsfoot, - coughs and chest complaints
- Comfrey – healing generally, encourages cell regeneration
- Dandelion – high in vitamins and minerals it is considered a general 'tonic' It helps unlock minerals from the soil because like many other important pasture plants it is deep rooted. An important source of magnesium and potassium,
- Milk Thistle - protects and supports the liver
- Nettle in field margins, can be cut for hay. Nutrient rich
- Plantain – soothing internally and externally
- Sheep sorrel - rich in nutrients including potassium
- Betony – digestive issues, also considered grounding traditionally.
- Wild Garlic – good for everything!
- Yarrow – gut healing, staunches bleeding and contains vitamins including A



Birdsfoot Trefoil, Lotus Corniculatus

## Herbs for Stress.

Stressed animals have lower immunity so are more susceptible to health challenges such as bacteria, viruses and parasites.

An adaptogen is a plant which helps support the body to deal with both the physical and emotional effects of stressors and our native adaptogen is **nettle seed**, working as a trophorestorative (tonic) to the adrenals. The seeds can be harvested in autumn. The entire nettle plant can be cut, dried and fed as hay.

### Herbs to Prevent Internal Parasites

Tannin rich plants are extensively researched as an effective method of internal parasite control. Plants in pasture such as sanfoin (dislikes heavy clay soils and can be replaced with lucerne in these conditions), birds foot trefoil, and chicory all contain tannins which attach to proteins making the gut inhospitable for parasites.



Chicory flower

### Herbs to Soothe the Gut

With any animal depleted of vitamins and minerals, nettle would be indicated for its rich nutrient content including iron, along with demulcent (soothing) herbs to help the gut - ie plantain and marshmallow root, and yarrow. An infusion of these with the addition of a little honey for energy and garlic for its immune boosting properties can be added to the water or as a drench in severe cases.

### Herbs to Support the Liver

Milk thistle protects the liver from toxicity, and centaury offers protection against fluke. Dandelion root is also useful as is garlic.



Milk thistle leaves

### Herbs for External Pests and Parasites

Neem oil and lavender repel parasites and insects. To make an infusion, steep the neem oil with fresh garlic and lavender - warm ingredients up in a bowl over a pan of water - leave overnight, strain and add the lavender. (Beware, neem oil stinks which is probably why it is such an effective repellent!) A cold version is to combine all ingredients and leave for two weeks then strain.

Use like a pour-on in the same pattern. Repeat regularly.

Can also be used for mites (against sweet-itch) and as fly repellent.

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