

## The farmers using drones to watch their flocks by flight

### Level 2 • Upper intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

Match the animals with the sounds they make.

- |           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| 1. dogs   | a. howl  |
| 2. cattle | b. miaow |
| 3. cats   | c. bleat |
| 4. wolves | d. bark  |
| 5. sheep  | e. neigh |
| 6. horses | f. moo   |

#### 2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

treat  
herd (verb)

enjoyable  
calves

trough  
flock

outpace  
herd (noun)

miracle  
stag

1. If you \_\_\_\_\_ animals, you make them move together as a group to another place. (para 1)
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a large group of animals of the same type that live and move about together. (para 2)
3. If you \_\_\_\_\_ someone, you move faster than them. (para 4)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ are young cows. (para 4)
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a group of sheep, goats or birds. (para 5)
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a male deer. (para 5)
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is something special you give someone. (para 8)
8. An \_\_\_\_\_ experience is one that gives you great pleasure. (para 9)
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a long narrow open container used for holding water or food for animals. (para 11)
10. A \_\_\_\_\_ is something extremely lucky that would not normally be possible. (para 11)

#### 3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. Why did Corey Lambeth originally buy a drone?
2. Where is Jason Rentoul based?
3. Where did he get the idea to use a drone to herd sheep?
4. Which animals can become aggressive around sheepdogs?
5. How long did it take Corey Lambeth to find out his cattle's water trough had been knocked over?
6. How many sheep does Wojtek Behnke have?

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#### Sky shepherds: the farmers using drones to watch their flocks by flight

Alyx Gorman

26 December, 2019

- 1 Corey Lambeth, a New Zealand farmer, originally bought a drone for photography, but he quickly realized the device had more practical uses. "I thought, 'I'll just try it with the sheep and see what that goes like', and it actually worked out quite well," he says. Now Lambeth has been using a drone "pretty much as another dog" to herd sheep for three years.
- 2 "It's saves a lot of time when herding," says Jason Rentoul, a farmer based in Marlborough, New Zealand, who has been using drones with herds of sheep, deer and cattle for three years. "Sometimes it might take four men with a minimum of two dogs each, and now, with a drone, you can do that with two men and a lot less time."
- 3 It took quite a bit of experimentation to get to this point. Rentoul bought his first drone after watching a video of another farmer using one to herd deer on YouTube. In the early days, he lost drones to water damage and once, memorably, while trying to transport a bottle of wine.
- 4 "I now try and keep it fairly simple and low cost," he says. Rentoul finds the drone particularly helpful when herding deer. Unlike a sheepdog, a drone can outpace a running deer. The drone also works well for cattle with calves, which can be aggressive around sheepdogs.
- 5 That's not the only way his dogs have benefitted from aerial assistance. "They work together, the dog and drone. It was surprising how quickly the dogs figured it out. At first some of the dogs didn't like the drone and they'd bark at it, but very quickly they realized that the drone was there to help them. Sometimes they'll have to run a kilometre to get to a flock of sheep, and they seem to find the stock quicker because they can hear the drone and know it's working ahead of them." The dogs will also stand under the drone when they're feeling threatened by stags or cattle. "That's their safe place because the animals won't come near the drone."
- 6 Lambeth, too, has learned to innovate. After a period of successful herding, his flock became used to the drone and stopped responding to it. So he got creative. He recorded audio of his dogs barking and now plays that sound through the drone. "It's quite funny seeing the drone flying around, barking at the sheep."
- 7 Wojtek Behnke, a farmer based in England, is taking a different approach. After watching videos of sheep being herded by drone in New Zealand, Behnke became curious and bought his own. Now he's involved in the world's first "positive-association" study using drones.
- 8 Behnke separated a group of five sheep from his flock and got them used to his drone. Once the sheep were happy, he started creating positive associations. He would hide behind hedges, throwing special treats under the drone's path. When the sheep had learned that the drone brought them treats, he introduced them back to the flock. "Within a couple of weeks, I had all 100 following the drone." Now all 300 of Behnke's sheep can be led by a drone over short distances.
- 9 Behnke believes this can have an impact on the sheep's quality of life. "We measure 'a life worth living' by how many positive experiences they have throughout their lifetime and how many negative. The more positive, the more their life is worth living. I imagine being chased by dogs and being pushed around is probably less enjoyable than following something around, thinking 'Oh this is fun; I might get a treat.'"
- 10 All the farmers I spoke to for this story agree that the biggest advantage of using drones is for monitoring. Drones are an affordable set of eyes in the sky, making checks on stock and crops faster and more detailed – without having to disturb the animals.
- 11 Lambeth was particularly thankful for his drone one Christmas Eve. "My partner and I were sitting out having a barbecue, and we could hear the cows mooing." Previously, it would have ruined their night "driving out to each individual field to figure out what the problem was." Instead, "I sent the drone out, and I could see their water trough had been knocked over. It only took me 30 minutes." It was a modern miracle.

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#### 4 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. Jason Rentoul believes that drones save a lot of time when herding.
2. He bought his first drone after watching a video of a farmer using one to herd sheep.
3. His dogs took a long time to get used to the drone.
4. Wojtek Behnke uses a drone and a positive-association technique to herd his sheep.
5. All of his 300 sheep can be led for long distances by a drone.
6. With drones, farmers can check their stock and crops faster.

#### 5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a noun meaning *the process of testing various ideas, methods or activities to see what effect they have* (para 3)
2. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *be able to understand something or solve a problem* (para 5)
3. a noun meaning *animals such as cows and sheep that are kept on a farm* (para 5)
4. a verb meaning *invent or begin using new ideas, methods, equipment etc* (para 6)
5. a noun meaning *a particular way of thinking or dealing with something* (para 7)
6. an adjective meaning *wanting to find out about something* (para 7)
7. an adjective meaning *cheap enough for ordinary people to buy* (para 10)
8. a noun meaning *plants grown for food, normally on a farm* (para 10)

#### 6 Phrases with prepositions

Complete the phrases from the text using prepositions. Check your answers in the text.

1. benefit \_\_\_\_\_
2. bark \_\_\_\_\_
3. respond \_\_\_\_\_
4. involved \_\_\_\_\_
5. separate \_\_\_\_\_
6. thankful \_\_\_\_\_

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### 7 Word-building

Complete the table using words from the text.

	verb	noun
1.	use	
2.	assist	
3.	associate	
	verb	adjective
4.	enjoy	
5.	thank	
6.	afford	

### 8 Discussion

Discuss the statements.

- Drones are dangerous and should only be used by licensed professionals.
- Criminals will find drones very useful.

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### KEY

#### 1 Warmer

1. d
2. f
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. e

#### 2 Key words

1. herd (verb)
2. herd (noun)
3. outpace
4. calves
5. flock
6. stag
7. treat
8. enjoyable
9. trough
10. miracle

#### 3 Find the information

1. for photography
2. Marlborough, New Zealand
3. from a YouTube video
4. cattle with calves
5. 30 minutes
6. 300

#### 4 Comprehension check

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T

#### 5 Find the word

1. experimentation
2. figure out
3. stock
4. innovate
5. approach
6. curious
7. affordable
8. crops

#### 6 Phrases with prepositions

1. from
2. at
3. to
4. in
5. from
6. for

#### 7 Word-building

1. use
2. assistance
3. association
4. enjoyable
5. thankful
6. affordable