

Contents

3	Chairman's Welcome
4	RHASS News
5	Christmas gifting
6-8	Flock to the Show & Golden Shears
9	Awards & Grants
10-11	Remembering our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
12-13	2023 Presidential Initiative
14-17	Royal Highland Education Trust
18-20	Sponsorship & Fundraising
21	Farmstrong Scotland
22-23	Membership update
24-25	Report from Agritourism Workshop
26-27	Insight from Brian Henderson
28-29	Innovation in Agriculture
30	Chief Executive's Last Word











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As we approach a new year, naturally our thoughts turn to memories of the year past while planning for the year ahead. It is with sadness and pride we reflect on the passing of our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, earlier this year.

I know many of you will have memories of seeing Her Majesty, whether at the Show or elsewhere. My personal memories of The Queen from the Royal Highland Show are, as a young farmer in 1984, jostling in the stock-judging crowds to catch a glimpse as Christine Imrie had the honour of meeting Her Majesty. Then, in 2009, as deputy steward of the main ring my focus was on getting all stations organised as Jimmy Muir escorted The Queen around the exhibits.

This year, having represented the Society at Edinburgh's thanksgiving service and in London at the funeral service, my memories are strengthened further. Along with all our members, we wish King Charles III and the Royal family strength in their time of loss. Meanwhile, many of our closer RHASS families grieve their own losses and we hold them close in our community.

Time has flown since June and the RHASS team are busy planning and preparing for the 2023 Royal Highland Show. The wheels keep turning at RHASS headquarters, in our agricultural businesses, and our lives at large. I hope harvest time has been kind to you all, hopefully slightly easing the challenges of the global energy crisis.

Technology means that the impact of world events is brought front and centre in our daily lives. With this accessibility brings advancement and instant changes within our agricultural

world - this can be seen close to home with our RHS TV going out to over 82 countries during the 2022 Show. With the international Golden Shears World Championships being staged at the Show in 2023, we will continue to grow the Show's global reach.

The Royal Highland Education Trust continues to carry the message of where and how our food is produced. My thanks go to not only the RHET team and coordinators but also to their volunteers - without whose hard work it would not be possible to get the message out there.

It is indeed a privilege to represent our members weekly at committees, and events, flying the RHASS flag whenever possible. As volunteer board members, we work to support the wider RHASS team. Please continue to feedback your thoughts and ideas to your local directors to help continually improve your Society.

Finally, as the festive season fast approaches my best wishes go out to all our members for a joyful Christmas period. I look forward to getting out and about and meeting you at local events in the new year.

Jim Warnock, RHASS Chairman



FLOCK TO THE SHOW TO CELEBRATE SCOTTISH SHEEP FARMING

Earlier this autumn, the Society's 'Flock to the Show' campaign was launched. This nation-wide public art trail is calling for artists throughout Scotland to get involved and help tell the story of Scotland's sheep farming sector.

Find out more about this exciting initiative on page 6.

GOLDEN SHEARS CALLS FOR APPLICATIONS

The Golden Shears World Sheep Shearing & Woolhandling Championships will take place at the 2023 Royal Highland Show. Applications are currently being sought from countries around the world – over 30 countries send teams annually to compete in this competition, which celebrates the very best of global sheep shearing and woolhandling talent.

Read more about the Golden Shears on page 8.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

A recent economic report has outlined the major impact of the Royal Highland Show on Scotland's economy – and it has been shown to be greater than that of Edinburgh's Hogmanay Celebrations.

Watch out for further details of this report in the next Society magazine and in the run up to the 2023 Highland Show.



Christmas gifting ideas

Stuck for some last-minute Christmas inspiration? We have a range of items on the Royal Highland Show website that are ideal for festive gifting, and with 30% off selected items you can grab a bargain too! Discounts valid 18th November - 18th December.



PERFECT PYJAMAS

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Highland Show, we collaborated with print designer Karon Mabon to produce fabulously fun Highland Showthemed pyjamas!

The pyjama set, made from 100% cotton with satin piping, is adorned with illustrations of all the animals, produce, machinery and crafts that represent our Royal Highland Show.

SPECIAL SALE PRICE: £84

LUXURIOUS SILK SCARVES

Featuring the same wonderful design as the pyjamas, these silk scarves make a colourful addition to any outfit – alternatively, tie them to a handbag or use as a hair accessory.

SPECIAL SALE PRICE: £45.50





LIMITED-EDITION GIN

The Royal Highland Show partnered with craft distillers Avva Scottish Gin to create a special limited-edition gin, celebrating 200 years since the very first Show took place.

The bespoke recipe of 12 botanicals includes dandelion, mint, nettle, red clover and honey, all sourced from the eight regions the Show toured before it settled at Ingliston in 1960.

SPECIAL SALE PRICE: FROM £24.50



AN AMAZING DAY OUT

Give the gift that everyone would thank you for this Christmas – a ticket to the Royal Highland Show!

Make memories that will last a lifetime - early bird tickets are available now, so you can grab your gift at a reduced price.

Members will still have the option to buy discounted tickets nearer to the Show as part of the benefits linked to Society membership.

BUY NOW AT: ROYALHIGHLANDSHOW.ORG

Shop all of these amazing gifts at shop.royalhighlandshow.org

RHASS LAUNCHES 'FLOCK TO THE SHOW' PUBLIC ART CAMPAIGN

30 sheep sculptures to travel across Scotland

RHASS is launching a large-scale public art trail across Scotland, titled 'Flock to the Show'.

Designed to celebrate the return of Golden Shears World Championships to the Royal Highland Show in 2023 and raise money for the RHASS Bicentennial Fund, the campaign will feature over 30 specially designed sheep sculptures.

The sculptures will form a free discovery trail for local people and visitors of all ages across Scotland to explore, enjoy and learn about Scotland's long history of sheep farming as well as challenges faced by the sector.

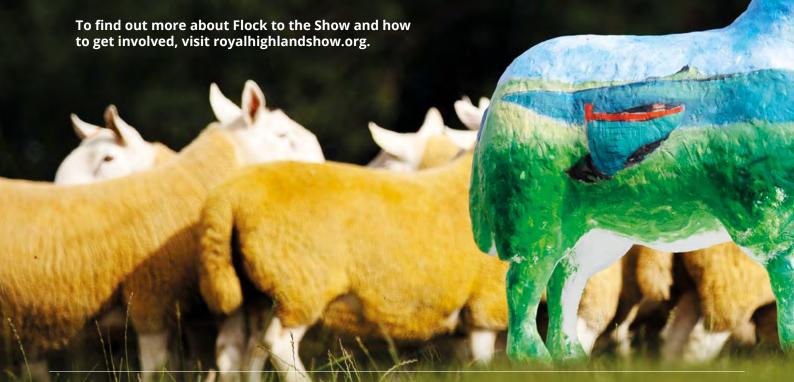
Each fibre glass sheep will be sponsored by local businesses, community groups and education organisations. They will tour across Scotland to form four unique trails in both rural and urban locations during April-May 2023.

Decorated by local artists they'll raise awareness and profiles of emerging Scottish artistic talent. Interested artists can apply online now at royalhighlandshow.org to be a part of the project.

The flock will return to the Royal Highland Show during the Golden Shears in June 2023, which will be the only time the public will see the sculptures together in one place, forming a family-friendly trail to follow around the Showground.

Following the Golden Shears, the flock will be auctioned at a special Gala event to raise funds that will support the newly-launched Bicentennial Fund, which will fund projects around the topics of mental health, sustainability, succession, and women in agriculture.

The flock will then scatter and find new homes across the world, ensuring a fitting legacy for the Golden Shears!





RHASS CHAIRMAN, JIM WARNOCK, COMMENTED:

This exciting project will go a long way to raising awareness of Scotland's long history with sheep farming and engaging the public with it in a fun, interactive way, as well as highlighting the issues facing farmers today.

"The funds raised from the auction of the completed sculptures will help to support RHASS's charitable remit.



Royal Highland Show to host World Shearing & Woolhandling **Championships**

Shearing teams from across the world are now applying to enter the 2023 Golden Shears World Sheep Shearing & Woolhandling Championships.

Taking place at the 2023 Royal Highland Show (22-25 June 2023), 20 years since last being hosted in Scotland, the Golden Shears World Championship is the premier sheep shearing and woolhandling competition, attracting shearers from over 30 countries. The 2023 competition is sponsored by Lister Shearing, British Wool, Ulster Wool and Elanco.

With almost 200,000 visitors flocking to the Royal Highland Show, next year's Golden Shears stage will be viewed by a huge audience both at the Show in person and online.

Competitors will be treated to a taste of Scottish hospitality with a gala dinner to open the competition, as well as having the opportunity to experience being part of the world-famous Royal Highland Show.

Jim Warnock, Chairman of the Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS), commented:

"There is no better stage than the Royal Highland Show to celebrate the amazing skills of competitors at the Golden Shears. Scotland has a long and renowned heritage of sheep farming and woolhandling, so it is fitting that the Show will host this prestigious competition.



addition of the Golden Shears only adds to the appeal of an already excellent day out, and offers a world stage on which competitors can display their skills."

George Graham, Chairman of Golden Shears World Council, added:

"The 2023 Golden Shears World Shearing and Woolhandling Championships will be a spectacular event, showcasing the skills of competitors from over thirty countries. Taking place in Scotland at the Royal Highland Show, it will be a brilliant setting for next year's competition.

"This is the Olympics of shearing and woolhandling, with super athletes vying for the prestigious Golden Shears world teams and individual titles. Up to four and a half thousand sheep will lose their fleeces over the course of the event - a sight to behold!

"I would like to convey my best wishes to Scotland as the host country and all the visiting countries, and I hope after a few very difficult years this will be a phenomenal success for everyone involved."

Applications for the Golden Shears 2023 can be made on the Royal Highland Show website: royalhighlandshow.org. Applications will close in early January 2023.

RHASS AWARDS & GRANTS

RHASS is one of the oldest Scottish charities and, as well as promoting the best of food, farming and rural life thorough the flagship Royal Highland Show, it also provides awards and grants in support of rural Scotland, agriculture, and associated industries. The full list of these is published every year in our Annual Report and Accounts, which can be found on the RHASS website.

Recent awards include:

£8,555 to the British Horse Society

for the purchase of rescue equipment for large animals (farm and equine) as part of their partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the two Scottish Vet Schools to equip a network of bases covering the whole of Scotland.



£4.000 and free venue hire to the Scottish **Association of Young Farmers Clubs** (SAYFC) in support of their Cultivating Leaders programme, which aims to develop and grow the skills of young leaders in the agricultural sector.



A fund of up to £3,000 to support Scottish Shows to attend the ASAO conference held at the Pavilion at Ingliston from 4th to 6th November. In partnership with the Association of Shows and Agricultural Organisations (ASAO), RHASS hosted the first full annual conference since 2019. ASAO is the body that represents agricultural shows and organisations across the UK and their aim is to promote agriculture, horticulture and the countryside through events and to encourage and share best practice between agricultural societies and related organisations. The conference attracted more than 100 delegates from 40 UK Shows over the three days, including the Balmoral, Great Yorkshire and Royal Welsh.

REMEMBERING OUR PATRON, QUEEN **BLIZABETH II**

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was the Patron of our Society for 70 years, unceasingly championing Scottish culture, farming and rural life throughout her lifetime.

Her dedication to many aspects of rural Scotland, from equestrianism to agriculture and livestock breeding, has been invaluable to the Society and communities across Scotland, the UK and the world at large.

It is with great fondness and pride that we look back on her connection to RHASS and the Royal Highland Show over the years.



The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society was first granted a Royal Charter from King George III in 1787. Queen Elizabeth II become the Society's Patron in 1952, the year she acceded the throne. She visited in June of 1960, planting a Copper Beech tree which still stands on the edge of the west lawn of Ingliston House.

Her Majesty carried the mantle of the Society's Patronage with passion and enthusiasm, with her love of livestock and rural life well known. The Queen visited the Royal Highland Show three times in her lifetime. The first time was in 1960 for the official opening of the new Ingliston site, now called the Royal Highland Centre; the second time was in 1984 for its 25th anniversary, with her third and last visit in 2009.

The Queen's Cup

The Show's most prestigious livestock honour, the Queen's Cup, rotates every year between the champions of the livestock sections at the Royal Highland Show. Named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II, it was donated by Her Majesty in 1960 and awarded in that year to Viscount Allandale in the Pedigree Beef Section.







QUEEN'S CUP CHAMPIONS OVER THE YEARS

2022 - Sheep - Ben Radley, Dumfries with a Charollais shearling ewe, Charollais Champion then overall Sheep Champion

2019 - Light Horse - Nicola Donaldson (owner) of Shropshire, with champion of the Junior Ridden Mountain and Moorland, Wynbrook Playfair, a Welsh section C gelding, ridden by Aliya Khan, produced and entered by Sarah Parker

2018 - Dairy Cattle - Mr & Mrs Laird, Blythbridge Holsteins of West Linton with Jersey Cow, Fourcross Anthony Carozza, cow with over two or three calvings, winner, Jersey Champion then overall Dairy Champion

2017 - Beef Cattle - Mr & Mrs M J Alford, Devon, with Limousin heifer, Foxhill Mamamia, winner, Limousin Champion then overall Beef Cattle Champion

2016 - Heavy Horse - Messrs Hanna, Co. Antrim Northern Ireland with Clydesdale Mare Macfin Diamond Queen, overall Clydesdale Champion

Despite not winning the Queen's Cup herself (the Queen Mother did so in 1991, for the Best Animal from the Sheep Section), the Queen enjoyed great success with her stock at the Show over the years, being a keen breeder of Highland cattle and Highland ponies. Most recently in 2022 her Highland bull, Gusgurlach of Balmoral, took home five champion rosettes, including Highland Champion and Best Animal Bred by Exhibitor.

Memories of meeting Her Majesty

Jim Gammie, of Drumforber, Laurencekirk, has fond memories of showing Her Majesty around at the 2009 Royal Highland Show. As Chief Steward of Cattle, Mr Gammie was tasked with escorting Her Majesty round the cattle lines where she met exhibitors, livestock and gave out the top prizes.

He said: "First and foremost, Her Majesty was a lovely, lovely lady. She had an easy charm that put everyone at ease very quickly. I was nervous but that was quickly dispelled, she had a great sense of humour.

"I myself, was gently but firmly chided for breeding Limousin cattle and not a traditional breed, which was all delivered with a twinkle in her eye. She was knowledgeable about agriculture and cattle in particular, and asked pertinent questions throughout.

"Seeing all these tributes pour in for Her Majesty from across the world on all she has done and what she meant to people, we were honoured she took the time to come to the Royal Highland Show."

William Sanderson, a Director of the Society during her 2009 visit, also showed The Queen round during a visit to the Show. He recalls her being very pleasant and easy to talk with, with particular interest in both the livestock and his directorship.

If you have your own fond memories or photos of meeting the Queen at the Royal Highland Show or in relation to Scottish agriculture at large, we would love to hear about them.

Please either email marketingmailbox@rhass.org.uk or send by post:

FAO Marketing Executive, RHASS, Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh EH28 8NB

Please note that we will be unable to return any photographs or documents sent to us.

THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE

Shining a spotlight on the role of science in farming

by RHASS Vice President, Ewan Pate



One of the well-established traditions of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland is that every year the directors appoint an honorary president and four honorary vice presidents. Along with the honorary chaplain they make up the presidential team.

All of us in the 2023 team represent the Perth area and that is with good reason. Before 1960, when RHASS settled at its permanent home at Ingliston, the Royal Highland Show moved on an annual basis round the Society's eight regions and in 2023 it would have been somewhere in the Perth area, which covers Angus, Perth and Kinross and Fife.

As an aside, it is interesting to ponder where the Show might have been held if it had still been peripatetic. In 1949 and 1957 it was held on reclaimed land at Riverside Drive in Dundee but that is now home to an airport and industrial units. It is hard to think of an alternative in the area so we are very glad to have the magnificent site at Ingliston as our home.

The "honorary" part of the presidential role is slightly misleading, as successive teams have found out. There is some work involved. They can create a "President's Initiative". Excitingly, there are no rules or guidelines as to what it might involve and that has led to a great variety of worthwhile projects over the years.

After a few preparatory meetings, it has been decided that the 2023 theme is to be "The Science" of Food and Drink." It is not only an endlessly fascinating subject; it is an incredibly relevant one. With so much attention being paid to policy matters, a casual observer could be forgiven for thinking farming is mostly about politics. They are important of course, but agriculture is in essence a scientific endeavour. All the challenges which lie ahead, whether it is increasing efficient food production, tackling climate change or making better use of scarce resources, can only be tackled by the clever application of science and engineering.

The planned aim of the RHASS Presidents' Initiative for 2023 is partly to raise awareness of the link between science and food production. But it is equally intended to create a forum for lively discussions between scientists, farmers of all ages and consumers.

President Ian Duncan Millar commented:

Ve take our staple food and drink and indeed our many excellent artisan products as a 'given'. Our initiative for the 2023 Show hopes to shine some light on the excellent and necessary science that forms the initial understanding and innovation upon which these essentials of our daily lives are built

The President's Initiative will of course be based around the four days of the Royal Highland Show, but we plan start nearly six months earlier with the release of fortnightly press articles written by some of the best communicators in the world of agricultural science. These would set the tone for a series of receptions open to all to be held in the President's Stand at the Show. Ideally, these would be designed as opportunities for conversations where visitors can spend as long as they wish interacting with leading innovators and scientists in a relaxed setting.

Also in the pipeline is a series of receptions held over the four days of the Show, each with a theme. On the Thursday and Friday these would be more oriented towards producers, whereas on the Saturday and Sunday, sessions will be more consumer focussed.

The other main strand of the initiative will focus on the Food Hall where it is proposed that all the exhibitors from the Perth area will have the chance to be sited close together around a central display showing the diversity of food and drink produced in the region.

It is going to be an interesting project to deliver and, if it explains the contribution of science to food production in Scotland, it will have served its purpose admirably.



364 Primary 6 pupils from the Perth & Kinross and Forth Valley areas took part in a Food & Farming Day organised by the Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) and sponsored by the Scottish Government.

On Monday 27th October Jan Dixon of Solsgirth Home Farm opened her farm gates to pupils from Robert Douglas Memorial School, Balhousie, Comrie, Abernyte, Morrison's, Banchory, Muthill, Sunnyside, St Bernadettes and St Serfs Primary Schools. There were over twenty members of the rural community who had given up their days to help educate children about all things food and farming.

There were ten interactive activity stations for pupils to learn about sustainable eating and potato production, cereals, bees and honey, the red meat industry (QMS), healthy soils, and the dairy industry, plus all sorts of animals from cows and pigs to rheas. Each of the activities focused on educating pupils to understand where our food comes from, including a station from Lantra outlining jobs in the industry.

"I just wanted to emphasise how brilliant the day was for the children. Every member of staff was outstanding and so knowledgeable, it was so interesting and smoothly run. A truly fantastic experience for staff and children! Thank you so much for letting us be a part of it. Days like yesterday are what children remember in years to come." Ms Smith - Abernyte Primary School

"Taking part in RHET Food and Farming days like this one at Solsgirth is a great way to help children make the links about where their food comes from and how it is produced. The children were all very enthusiastic and asked fantastic questions throughout." Tara Clark - Project Coordinator RHET Perth & Kinross

Scottish Government award RHET funding through the Good Food Nation team to support core essential activity, such as bus transport, making events like this possible. We are grateful to their support and to other organisations who donate to enable the essential work of the charity.

GROW YOUR OWN LOAF ENTERS ITS 7TH YEAR

The ever-popular Grow Your Own Loaf project has been running since 2015.

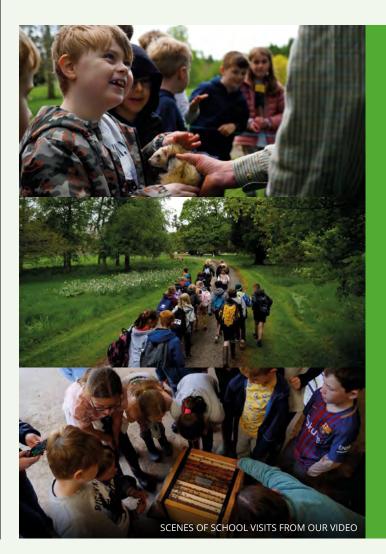
Since that time, hundreds of schools have taken part from all over the country, with many loaves baked using the wheat grown in schools. Where the crop and wheat plants failed, this too was used an opportunity to learn about the reality of growing food.

Open to all schools in Scotland, the project supplies free wheat seeds to schools. They can then plant these seeds, grow their own wheat, grind the wheat into flour, and make their own loaf. Hence the name of the project, Grow Your Own Loaf!

As part of the project, RHET also helps support teachers in their delivery of the project. This includes providing teacher training sessions, fact sheets, recording sheets, podcasts, posters, videos, recipes, and more.

If you or anyone you know would like to get involved, please head to rhet.org.uk/gyolwakelet to find out more.





SCOTTISH **LEARNING FESTIVAL**

RHET recently had the pleasure of taking part in the online Scottish Learning Festival on September 21-22.

As part of their Interactions, Experiences and Spaces Project, we created a video that detailed the benefits to learners of engaging with RHET. We covered the length and breadth of Scotland to hear from students and teachers about their experiences of class talks and farm visits.

You can view the video on The Royal **Highland Education Trust YouTube** channel.

THE JOURNEY OF FOOD -SEEDS AND **GRAINS**

RHET will be producing a wide range of new learning content and offering exciting teacher training opportunities, which will focus on seeds and grains.

The new content will be available through the Raindrop platform, which allows it to be organised and linked to educational levels. You can then easily select the resources most suitable for your pupils.

The portfolio will be built upon over the year, so even if there is nothing that suits your needs at first, keep coming back to check for new content.

The Journey of Food Seeds and Grains initiative was launched with a training day for teachers and volunteers in September. 45 teachers joined us in The Pavillion as we shared details of our Grow Your Loaf Project, activities linked to oilseed rape, our Reindeer Dust project and a new 'STEM on the farm' teaching resource.





CHRISTMAS IS COMING

This year, RHET is building on a pilot project first delivered before the pandemic. The 'Reindeer Dust Project' involves telling the story of food production focusing on oats and producing 'reindeer dust' for pupils to take home.

Most schools already make reindeer dust of some sort, and with limited additional effort we have created a project that facilitates the production of environmentally friendly and sustainable reindeer dust. The recipe uses oats, hay, a wee bit of sugar, a piece of popcorn and, last but not least, a Christmas wish. We are currently looking for volunteers to help deliver this programme in schools so get in touch if you are interested.

FESTIVAL OF FARMING

During the 7-18th of November, RHET orchestrated the Festival of Farming.

Over the course of a fortnight, we offered farm visits, resource boxes for early years, classroom talks and a new digital engagement platform.

In addition, stories behind food production were shared via a range of digital farm visits. These visits were supported by learning resources and participants were encouraged to ask any burning questions that they had.

RHET NEWS



We have a wide range of volunteer opportunities to get engaged with this winter. We have exciting opportunities for Christmas elves to help us deliver Reindeer Dust sessions in schools! These sessions cover food production and result in the pupils producing glitter-free reindeer dust.

We are also looking for farmers with engineering challenges to put forward for schools. The school will then work with an engineer to come up with solutions to your problem.

To get involved with these opportunities please email training@rhet.org.uk

GIVE TO HELP PROMOTE & SUPPORT **OUR WORK**

Whether you're marking an anniversary, birthday, wedding day or remembering a loved one, why not ask your friends and family to make a charitable donation to RHET instead of giving gifts.

Or if you are looking to give an alternative, thoughtful gift, especially with Christmas approaching, you could make a donation to RHET and receive a donation certificate to let your recipient know you have chosen to support us in their honour.

For more information, please contact rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk



IEW RHET TRACTOR SELFIE FRAMES!

Back in 2019, RHET created a series of tractor selfie frames for several of its Countryside Initiatives.

These selfie frames were a huge hit with children and adults alike who fancied grabbing a photo using one.

New selfie frames were recently printed for the Argyll & Bute, Clyde, Fife, Perth & Kinross, and Scottish Borders areas.

Be sure to keep an eye out for these new selfie frames at the next RHET event in your area. You can snap your own photo just like this happy bunch!



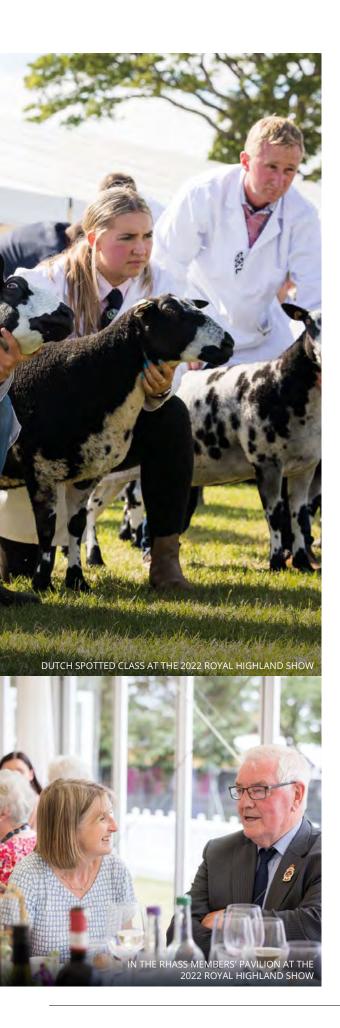
Since 1784, the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland has been the respected standard-bearer for farming and rural industry in Scotland.

The Society represents everyone who supports the very best standards in agriculture, forestry and stewardship of the countryside, which are such essential parts of our heritage – and our future.

Our rural industries are major contributors to the economy and character of the country. Throughout the highlands, lowlands and islands, these people produce our food and drink, manage and conserve our countryside and provide access to sport and recreation for millions.

With its two-hundred-year history of encouraging advances in education, science, technology and craftsmanship, RHASS is in a strong position to continue its twin roles of building business for Scotland's land-based and allied industries, and of creating a wider public understanding of the management of the land and rural resources.

Our founders' vision of a 'successful Society powered by its members, its people and its principles' defines how RHASS operates today. Values of Service, Quality, Value, Tradition and Trust have shaped the charity; building strong relationships with members, customers and suppliers.





RHASS AND HOGGS OF FIFE AGREE CORPORATE FUNDRAISING PARTNERSHIP

RHASS and Hoggs of Fife have recently agreed a corporate fundraising partnership, with the aim of raising £30,000 over 3 years in support of the Bicentennial Fund.

As well as raising vital funds, as part of the partnership, RHASS members will also receive a discount on the entire Hoggs of Fife range and the Society will receive a donation of £0.10 in every £1 spent by a member.

Scott Taylor and Nikki Castley from Hoggs of Fife were onsite recently to formally sign the agreement and to make a cheque presentation for £5,000 to Ally Caulfield, Sponsorship & Fundraising Manager at RHASS.

Fife Country are a Scottish-owned and family-run business, with a design and manufacturing heritage stretching back to 1888, and still based in our original location in Strathmiglo, Fife. We provide fine quality, fit-for-purpose, clothing and footwear, representing great value, that is specially designed for country professionals and country enthusiasts alike, making our products a way of country life. As a retailer of Hoggs of Fife clothing and footwear, we are offering 20% off all full priced clothing, footwear, and accessories to all RHASS members. **Just quote 22RHASS at checkout**.

You can shop online at fifecountry.co.uk/RHS

SUPPORTING OUR SECTOR

This year we launched the Bicentennial Fund to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first ever Royal Highland Show. This fund will focus on 4 key areas important to Scottish Agriculture:

- MENTAL HEALTH
- ENVIRONMENT / SUSTAINABILITY
- SUCCESSION
- WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

The Society helped provide the seed funding needed to launch Farmstrong Scotland, one of the most exciting and muchneeded community projects to emerge in recent years. In line with our founding values, your Society is committed to supporting Farmstrong Scotland establish, thrive and build.

We have continued our support of education and young people with grants to the Royal Highland Educational Trust and Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, supporting the advancement of science and animal husbandry and empowering the next generation to push the boundaries.

All of this is thanks to you.

Without you, our members, and our Show sponsors this simply would not be possible, so thank you for making a difference.

One of the questions we continually ask is how do we do more? How do we have a bigger impact in our communities?







THE SIX RHASS-FUNDED CANDIDATES WHO ATTENDED THE WOMEN IN FOOD & AGRICULTURE SUMMIT THIS YEAR - (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) CAROLE BRUNTON, LESLEY MITCHELL, HEATHER WILDMAN, CHLOE STEWART, JUDITH TAYLOR, ALIX RITCHIE

THE PURPOSE OF FARMSTRONG SCOTLAND

As we all know, farming and crofting come with a unique set of challenges that are hard to predict or control - ranging from drought and flooding to fluctuations in commodity prices, changing legislation, and new technology, all of which have the ability to threaten the bottom line.

Alongside these external factors, businesses are facing the daily challenge of recruiting staff, managing cash flow, responding to consumer needs and planning for the future.

With all these additional pressures, there is increased concern around farmer and crofter wellbeing. Farmers and crofters often prioritise the management of their land and livestock over their own needs, which can lead to stress, burnout and a lack of sleep, exercise and down time.

For many, the sector can be quite lonely, working on their own and not interacting with many people on a daily basis. If wellbeing is not prioritised, it can have devastating consequences. In the UK, farming has the highest suicide rate across any occupational group -75% of which are men. One farmer a week loses their life to suicide every year in the UK.

In 2018, the Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) and other key rural stakeholders (Women in Agriculture, NFU Scotland, SAOS, The

Scottish Association of Young Farmers, The Rural Youth Project and The National Rural Mental Health Forum, to name a few) came together to develop the Farmstrong Scotland model.

RHASS and global men's health charity Movember then agreed to become seed funders in late 2021, providing the incubation support and pump prime funding needed to get the programme off the ground.

As 2023 rapidly approaches, RHASS will start to provide additional day to day governance and management support, to help prepare the team and Farmstrong Scotland for an official launch.

This will see Farmstrong Scotland offering a range of free tools and events to help farmers and crofters develop their mental and physical resilience. These awareness and promotional activities will take place at agricultural shows and community events across Scotland to promote the programme.

To keep up to date on these activities or to support Farmstrong Scotland, please keep an eye on their social channels where you can find out more about the free workshops and how you can get involved in fundraising.

f @FarmstrongScot

@FarmstrongScot



ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW FEEDBACK

Thank you to those members who gave us their feedback on the 2022 Show. We work hard to give all of our members and guests at the Show a great experience, and we want to keep improving to ensure the Show remains sustainable and a fantastic expression of what is best in food, farming and rural life. Your feedback helps us continue to do this each year.

Two areas where, following feedback, we are taking immediate action for the 2023 Show are on toilets & facilities and member forward parking. The Society has invested significantly in the Showground over the last few years and that investment will continue with improvements to the toilets and facilities ahead of the 2023 Show. We will also be reinstating member forward parking for the 2023 Show.

Other feedback is being taken through the debrief and planning process for the 2023 Show.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

As a Society, we work hard to keep our membership fees low to ensure as many people as possible are able to benefit from membership. The last time

we increased the Annual fee for membership was 2017 (2016 for Fixed term membership fees, and Life membership fees in 2012). A previous proposal to raise fees in 2020 was postponed in light of the outbreak of the Covid pandemic.

As a charity, RHASS has to balance the level of its membership fees, ensuring that they are affordable, whilst reflecting the significant benefits received, for example the right to attend the Royal Highland Show on all four days. All members will be aware of the current high levels of inflation and the Society, along with most other organisations, is seeing cost increases across every area of operation.

The RHASS Board therefore proposed an increase in fees to members at a General Meeting, which was held on 26 October 2022. This was approved unanimously and fees for the term commencing 1 January 2023 will be as follows:

- Adult Annual £85
- Adult 10-year Term £850
- Life £2,125 from January 2023 (rising to £2,550 from January 2024).

There will be no increase in the Junior and Senior membership fees.



We will communicate directly with all members who are affected by the new fees. If you wish to discuss your membership options, please email the membership team at membership@rhass.org.uk or call on 0131 335 6215.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

Thank you to all of you who have provided us with an email address so that we can send important documents and updates to you electronically. As a charity, we have to make the best use of all our assets and, by using email to communicate where possible, this helps us contain costs at a time of rising inflation.

If we don't already have your email address and you are able to provide us with one, this is the best way for us to communicate with you about your membership of the Society and to keep you informed of different member benefits available such as discounts, events at the Royal Highland Centre, Show merchandise and other member updates.

If you can't provide us with an email address then our membership team are still available on the phone to answer any queries you have.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

We will be sending out a survey for you to give your views on your membership of the Society and associated benefits. We are always reviewing what we offer our members, and this is your opportunity to provide us with any suggestions you think would be a benefit to the membership. We cannot guarantee all requests will be actioned, but they will be taken on board and reviewed carefully with our Board of Directors.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR NEW **DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of the Society, and all RHASS members are entitled to stand for election as an Ordinary Director for the area in which they are resident. Nominations are now open for Ordinary Directors for the term 2023-2027. Diversity of experience and background strengthen the decision-making processes of the Board and RHASS welcomes applications from all members.

If you would like to be sent a nomination form, have an informal chat about what is involved in becoming a Director of RHASS or have questions about the election process, please contact the Society Secretary, Marie Livingstone, at mlivingstone@rhass.org.uk or on 0131 335 6205, or contact the Honorary Secretary, James Logan, on james@athelstaneford.com.

The closing date for receipt of nominations is **5pm on Wednesday 11 January 2023**. In the event of there being two or more valid nominations in any area, information on how to vote will be provided to all members who are resident in that area.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

The Society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is planned for Thursday 27 April 2023 at the Royal Highland Centre in the afternoon. Please join us as this is a great opportunity to catch up with fellow members, ask questions of the Directors and learn more about RHASS's work. Information on timings and how to join will be provided nearer the time.

Information will be posted on our website and social media, and a notice will be placed in the Scottish Farmer and emailed to all members for whom we hold an email address.

RHASS SUPPORTS ATTENDANCE AT WORLD AGRITOURISM CONFERENCE

A report from Caroline Millar, Scottish Agritourism Sector Lead



A delegation of seven agritourism business owners from Scotland attended the World Agritourism Conference in Vermont, USA in September. RHASS supported attendance at the event by covering registration fees and the preconference tours.

This was the only the second international agritourism conference, following the inaugural event in Italy in 2018.

The event brought together farmers, economic development professionals, and researchers from fifty-two countries across six continents.

Myself and Kay Wilson spoke at the event, sharing information about the Scottish Enterprise Monitor Farm Programme as a driver for business growth and new entrants to agritourism.

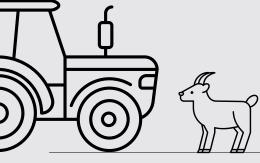
The trip started off by flying to Newark, New York and driving up to Burlington, Vermont over three days, visiting various farms in upstate New York and south Vermont on the way.

The farms were researched in advance. They included a visit to Billingtons Farm in Woodstock, a great example of a quality visitor attraction combined with a working dairy farm and a museum. Visitors could get up close with the dairy cows as well as learning

about farming and the history of agriculture and immigration in Vermont.

Another example was a visit to Maple Leaf Farm, where Mary and Jeff Smith spent the afternoon providing an insight into beef and maple syrup production on their farm near Shrewsbury. Jeff said that 50 years ago, 20% of Vermont was in trees and now 80% of the state is in trees, with under 20% in agriculture. Many family farms have stopped production. All beef from the farm is sold from a farm shop and at farmers' markets in the local community. Maple syrup is what generates the profits needed to survive - Vermont produces 50% of the USA's maple syrup, with over 2.5 million gallons produced per annum. We took part in sampling different strengths and types of syrup and bought the largest steaks ever for the BBQ that night.

On arrival in Burlington, we undertook the official conference tour. There was a real mixture of businesses, not all on a working farm which re-enforced our sector





decision in 2020 to be very specific about what agritourism is in Scotland. It was a common theme from a variety of countries attending the conference that they wished their country had a clear definition for agritourism. Scotland's definition is that agritourism takes places on a working farm or croft that produces food. Some of the businesses we visited on the tours were value adding to food but located in a town, not on farm.

The tour also made us appreciate our high-quality standards in Scotland and stringent environmental health standards which we often curse, but are essential for a fantastic customer experience.

The conference itself brought 350 delegates together in one location with another 150 watching online from around the world.

It was a great opportunity to re-connect with existing international contacts and to make new connections. As an example, ten years on from my RHASS-sponsored Nuffield Scholarship travels, one of the most inspiring farmers I met during my research came to Vermont to speak about agritourism in Tasmania. Tim Parsons now welcomes 13,000 international visitors a year on to this farm for farm tours. It was great to catch up with Tim and get a first-hand insight into agritourism in Australia.

Many delegates at the conference are looking to Scotland as a leader in agritourism due to our well organised and pro-active network, knowledge exchange focus and national strategy. Australia have launched their own national strategy in the last month and have used Scotland's version as a template.

As a result of this year's conference, an official international body is being established for global agritourism and I have been asked to help establish this body with other world leaders in the sector. Scotland hopes to host the

World Agritourism Conference in the next few years and we know that we can put on a fantastic showcase of high quality agritourism businesses to visit.

There is also a good opportunity to connect with others from around the UK to talk about growing agritourism. No other delegates from any other parts of the UK attended in person in Vermont and Scotland's seven-person-strong delegation was acknowledged by all who attended.

We are very grateful to RHASS for their support to help us showcase Scotland on an international stage.

Those who participated were Fiona Pollock, Ardross Farm, Fife; Kay Wilson and Anne Lennox, Lennox of Lomond, Argyll; Fiona Scott, Fearn Farm, Easter Ross; Liz Phillips, Cowden Farm, Aberdeenshire; Agnes Smith, Stralochy Farm, Perthshire and Caroline Millar, Balkello Farm, Angus.

Why tradition ne core of Scotland

Insight from Brian Henderson



"Transition", "transformation" and "innovation": we have been told that these three words will form the bedrock upon which Scotland's new farm policy will be built.

But while the details of how this brave new world - in which the country's farmers will become global leaders in sustainable and regenerative farming - will be delivered remain, at best, sketchy, it could be argued that one key word is missing from this aspirational list. And that word is 'tradition'.

Brian Henderson farms in Perthshire - and was surprised to realise he has been writing about and commenting on agricultural matters for over 40 years...

Here, he shares his insight with RHASS on what needs to be included in Scotland's new farming policy.

Not the short sighted, "it's aye been done that way" variety which has held the industry back - but an acknowledgement of the values which form the deeper, underlying cornerstones of farming life and which have held fast over the years and contributed so much to the industry's unique character.

The reputation which we in the industry have for always paying our bills, for helping our neighbours and other sectors of the community, for looking after the welfare of our animals and generally living in a thrifty and modest manner are part of this tradition which

eeds to form the s farming policy

stands in stark contrast to the extravagant claims and self-promotion of the corporate boardroom.

Without some nurturing, these values are at risk - and there are already worrying signs that the current uncertainties and fast-approaching major changes have knocked the self assurance necessary to uphold them.

My eyes were opened to this threat earlier this year when I found myself in the unusual position of making small talk with First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, while waiting for the rest of the press to gather at an impromptu Q&A session at this year's Highland Show.

Comparing notes on the mood at the Show with that of the last full-blown event in 2019, we were both impressed with the seamless resumption of the usual wonderful atmosphere – and the feeling that there always seemed to be an almost unbroken transition between shows, with each one taking up where the last had left off. But I had to comment that, despite the familiar feel-good factor, there was something slightly different about the 2022 show.

At the time I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was - for the feeling wasn't driven by any alteration in the time-tested formula of the show, or by any major changes in the

crowds attending and exhibiting.

As the days of the show rolled on, on several occasions this feeling returned - like the glitch in the computer programme in the film "The Matrix", it was something glimpsed only out of the corner of the eye - and which vanished quickly when you tried to focus on it.

But, with hindsight, I now think the feeling was driven by the occasional stutter in the collective confidence of the throngs which attended the show – as if the shock of the previous two years passing without this traditional landmark event had left a small bruise in the sector's self assurance.

The passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the accession to the throne of King Charles might be issuing a similar challenge to tradition - but at the same time it has undoubtedly highlighted the crucial role which it plays in our nation's identity.

So, it's important that those charged with drawing up Scotland's new farming policy recognise the crucial role played by the traditional values which are held in such high esteem in farming circles – and acknowledge the need to embed them at the core of any new strategy if the industry is to have the self confidence to deliver the demands of the future.

Innovation in Agriculture



How technology has advanced the sector - and why it needs to continue

The agriculture sector, especially in Scotland, has always been driven by innovation. Inventors across the years have been enthusiastic about investing in and developing new technologies, and that passion continues today.

In a world beset by challenges from all quarters, never has innovation been more vital to the sector's success. From tackling the implications of climate change to the crisis of rising costs and inputs, farmers need every helping hand they can get.

RHASS is proud to aid agri pioneers of all kinds and has a long history of doing so through our Technical Innovation Awards, which celebrate and recognise new products and implements that are helping to advance and improve the sector.

Over the years, entries have reflected the evolution of modern farming. Increasingly, digital solutions are being invented to solve everyday problems like drone-assisted technology for checking crop conditions, or apps to keep track of your cattle herds. The Technical Innovation Awards encourage developers and inventors to keep striving for the improvement of the sector. This year, a trend towards automated farming was shown by multiple entries, including Opico, which was awarded a Silver for the FarmDroid FD20. The FarmDroid is the world's first fully automatic robot that both seeds and mechanically weeds. It is solar powered and uses GPS to precisely place each seed.





THE RISE OF THE ROBOT TRACTOR

One significant development showcased for the first time at the Highland Show this year was the AgXeed AgBot range of autonomous agricultural machines – effectively, robot tractors! These were presented by SoilEssentials, the advanced service and distribution partners for the range.

Gregor Welsh, General Manager/ Hardware Development at Soil Essentials, talked about the impact that the AgXeed range had at the Show:

"Returning to the Royal Highland Show this year after a two-year absence, was in itself fantastic, but it also meant we really wanted to make an impact, show progression in precision farming and create a buzz around something special.

"Autonomous vehicles for agriculture are now a real and viable option. The AgBot exhibit on our stand (which was the tracked version, one of three models offered) attracted swathes of visitors who wanted to catch a glimpse, view it in its entirety up close and learn more about it. The excitement that revolved around it was tremendous and encouraging with lots of media interest too. Three days of field demonstrations followed the RHS, where the AgBot could be seen in impressive action."

Of course, like any momentous step change, there is some trepidation. However, Gregor acknowledges that the advance from hand labour, to animal-assisted, to hand driven vehicles, to fully automated ones is inevitable – and exciting.

"For many, the idea of an autonomous tractor working on Scottish soil was just that... an idea. The fact they are no longer on the distant horizon, but within possibility as a relevant addition to farming businesses can be hard to believe. The future is now the present.

"SoilEssentials help farmers improve and maximise their agricultural efficiency through a broad array of precision farming products and services - the AgBot is another valuable tool in that mix."

Other examples include 2021 Silver award winners Safe Forestry, an app created by Calum Duffy at Safe Worksite, which helps contractors comply with health and safety regulations within the forestry industry. Ensuring that all risk assessments and documentation are up to date, the app was created after Calum was challenged by the Health and Safety Executive during a site visit to improve the way he proves the competence of his operators.



Calum acknowledged the role innovation plays in moving the agri and rural sector forward: "Innovation challenges us to grow as a business and within our industry, innovation drives us to always do better and be more efficient. Without innovation, the industry could be left behind."

A hopeful step towards a return to normality

As harvest fades into the distance and winter approaches in earnest, it offers us a chance to pause, reflect and take stock on another rollercoaster of a year.

We as a Society went to great efforts to facilitate the return of the Royal Highland Show and put on a celebration worthy of its 200th anniversary.

And what a Show it was - it was great to be back in that fantastic atmosphere, but we also have to the acknowledge the large challenges we had to overcome in delivering it.

As the farming community know all too well, you get no break between sowing crops. Similarly, the RHASS staff team have been immersed these past months in the organisation of the 2023 Show, for which plans are well underway.

There's more to look forward to next year too, as we will be celebrating the return of the Golden Shears to Ingliston, 20 years on from when we last hosted it in 2003. This prestigious event will give us a chance to showcase all things about Scotland's sheep and agriculture on a global stage, while celebrating the skills of shearers and wool handlers from around the world.

We are delighted to be hosting competitors and representatives from over 30 countries, offering audiences, both in person and online, the opportunity to both experience the Royal Highland Show and engage with farming and rural life.



Building on the online success of 2022, more and more visitors from overseas are engaging and developing relationships with the full breadth of Scotland's agriculture, including technical advances, livestock and genetics.

In an increasingly global economy, RHASS's role is to make sure we create and nurture these international links. Links that will contribute to our growing audiences, while we continue to encourage and engage with our trade and agri communities, which we are constantly proud to be part of.

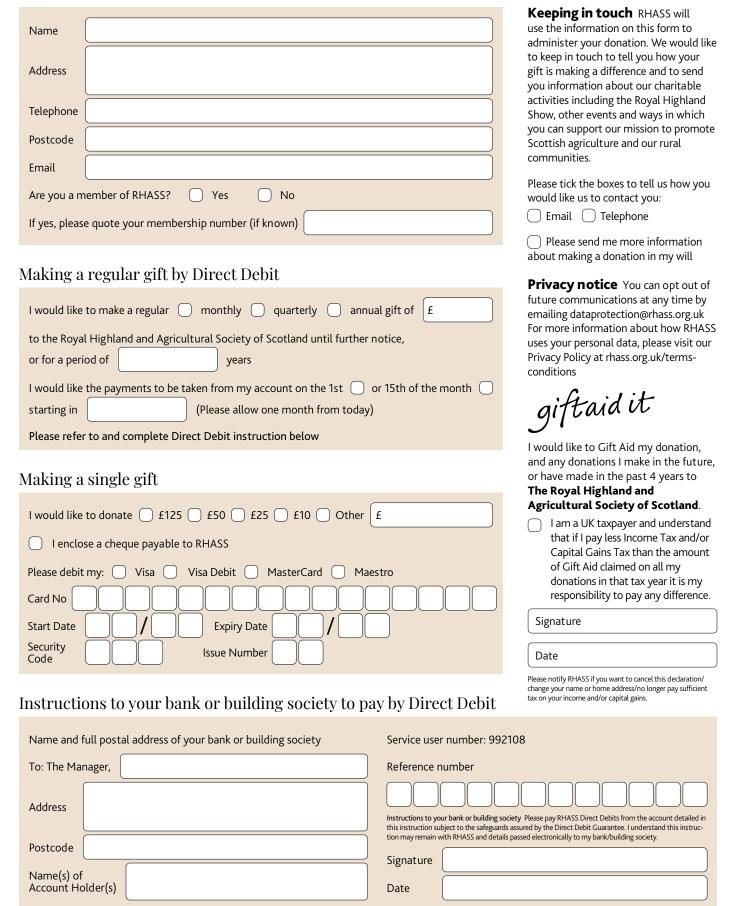
In the face of challenges both at home and further afield, 2022 was a difficult year. But 2023 continues is already showing signs of an upward curve and a further step towards normality for all of us.

With my best wishes to you and yours for the festive period and 2023,

Alan Laidlaw, Chief Executive



Contact details



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