

Nick

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*Promoting practical ideas
for improving the environmental
sustainability of farming in Scotland*

Nick Reiter
Crofters Commission
Castle Wynd
Inverness
IV2 3EQ

14 February 2008

Dear Nick,

You may have seen a press release or some of the media coverage about the new Future Farmer Award. The Award is designed to promote practical ideas for improving the environmental sustainability of farming in Scotland. Each year the Award will give a trailblazing Scottish farmer a package of support, including £4,000, to help them communicate their ideas to other farmers and land managers. It was launched in January and is backed by the Elizabeth Murray Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage.

We are hoping to attract a strong field of applicants for the Future Farmer Award in this first year and I would like to ask for your support in publicising the Award before the closing date of 14th April.

If you have a membership newsletter or e-bulletin perhaps you could include an item about the Award to encourage your members to consider applying for it? Perhaps staff who are in direct contact with farmers might like to draw it to the attention of any farmers who they think might be interested? Also, if you are able to make a link from your web site to www.futurefarmer.org.uk please let me know and I will include a reciprocal link when I update the site in March.

The text of the launch press release is reprinted overleaf and full details of the Award are at www.futurefarmer.org.uk. Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries or suggestions about the award.

With many thanks for your support,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Ashmole".

Anna Ashmole

Future Farmer Award
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FARMERS LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH NEW AWARD

Press release

21 January 2008

This week sees the launch of the Future Farmer Award, which is backed by the Elizabeth Murray Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage. This new award will promote practical ideas for improving the environmental sustainability of farming in Scotland. Each year the Award will give a trailblazing Scottish farmer a package of support to help them communicate their ideas to other farmers and land managers.

The organisers are looking for someone who is already improving the environmental sustainability of how they farm and would like the opportunity to inspire other land managers. The award, which includes £4,000, is intended to help the farmer make time over the coming year to promote their ideas.

The Future Farmer Award opens for applications this week and the closing date is the 14th April 2008. Applications will be assessed by a panel of experts and shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by representatives of the Elizabeth Murray Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage. The Award will be presented on World Environment Day, the 5th June. Full details of the Award, including an application form, are at www.futurefarmer.org.uk

The Future Farmer Award is co-ordinated by Anna Ashmole [1] on behalf of the Elizabeth Murray Trust [2]. Anna Ashmole said: "The Elizabeth Murray Trust was set up by an extraordinary family who loved the landscape of Scotland and who were active in all kinds of social efforts to improve what they saw as an ageing, depopulating, tragic and beautiful country. They were involved in early organic farming experiments in the 1940s and later in the Camphill movement. They were also innovators: Elizabeth's husband installed one of the first water-powered electricity plants in their home in Applecross. When the Trust asked me to develop long-term project I saw it as a chance to help farmers step outside the day-to-day concerns of running a farming business and inspire each other with new ideas to take Scottish farming into the future."

The Future Farmer Award will highlight practical ways in which farmers can contribute to government objectives on environmental sustainability [3]. It will help farmers consider new ideas when putting together applications for funding under Rural Development Contracts [4].

The Future Farmer Award will also feed in to the new National Discussion on food [5] by raising awareness of down-to-earth ways in which farmers can contribute to a 'greener Scotland' by reducing the environmental impact of food production.

Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment said:

"This award presents farmers with an excellent opportunity to herald the many examples of good and innovative work being undertaken the length and breadth of Scotland.

"As Cabinet Secretary I have been hugely impressed with the forward thinking approach adopted by the industry and the efforts made in finding ways of nurturing what is arguable Scotland's greatest asset – its natural environment."

The Future Farming Award is financially supported by Scottish Natural Heritage [6]. Peter Beattie, of Scottish Natural Heritage, said: "We know that there are many land managers in Scotland who are undertaking farsighted, cutting edge farm management which is also environmentally sustainable. SNH is pleased to support this innovative new award which will help farmers and crofters share with others what they are doing. We encourage land managers to think about entering, no matter how big or small their landholding is."

Ends

For references see <http://www.futurefarmer.org.uk/content/press.htm>