



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 13/09/2018

Crofting Federation announces short-list of nominations for young crofter awards

Next month, two awards will be made by the Scottish Crofting Federation following a call for nominations for Young Crofter of the Year and Best Newcomer Crofter 2018. The drive for the award is the Year of Young People 2018 and as such will celebrate the role of young people in crofting. The awards will be made at a special dinner which will be held during the *Celebrating the Spirit of Crofting* event on 5th October 2018 at Rothes, Moray and presented by Mel Irvine of Drummuir, one of the stars of BBC TV "This Farming Life".

SCF has announced the shortlisted nominees as:

For 'Young Crofter of the Year':

Donald MacSween, Ness, Isle of Lewis and Beth Rose, Birchwood Croft, Inverness-shire

For 'Best Newcomer Crofter 2018':

Sandra Baer and Lynn Cassells, Lynbreck Croft, Speyside and Lucy Williams, Tulloch Tea, Sutherland

"The judges were impressed by the high standards of entries which included personal statements, photos and video footage", said Patrick Krause, chief executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation "This gathering will bring together crofters from all over the Highlands and Islands to celebrate the resilience of crofting and those young people who contribute to it. There will be lots on offer for folks besides the awards, with two days of workshops, talks and visits as part of the wider event – Celebrating the Spirit of Crofting. This will be held at Grant Hall in Rothes and tickets can be obtained from our website www.crofting.org or from our Ullapool office on 01854 612220."

Donald MacSween from Ness, who grew up in a crofting family, was gifted a croft on his 21st birthday and has spent the past 13 years getting it back into working order. His tireless enthusiasm has been documented in two series of BBC Alba "Air an Lot" which has given viewers an insight into his enterprises, which include egg production, pigs, cattle and sheep. A former grazings clerk for his township, Donald is very much involved in wider township life, working with elderly neighbours to ensure they are able to continue to be active crofters.

Lucy Williams is a 'new entrant' since 2016. She and her husband Chris run a five acre croft at Tulloch, near Bonar Bridge. Despite being small, their croft is perfectly formed, and Lucy has used the space to create an innovative enterprise which taps into an up-and-coming niche market in Scottish Agriculture by planting a tea garden. Using the young farmers start-up grant they invested in a range of tea plants and this August released three home-grown tea blends for sale. In addition, Lucy milks goats on the croft and uses the milk to make soap and other cosmetics which she markets from her web shop and direct from the croft

Beth Rose has run a croft at the back of the Monadhliath mountains for the last seven years. Having worked as a senior charge nurse, she became a full-time crofter in 2017 when she took a career break to start a family with her husband. She has many strings to her bow, keeping cattle and sheep, maintaining the land and improving rush-laden pastures. She is often seen on her vintage tractor, at work with the 'mini-crofter', her son. Beth's future vision is to keep the land in good heart with pasture improvements and she has a long-term business plan to create a micro-distillery.

Despite having taken on a croft just two years ago Sandra and Lynn from Lynbreck Croft are making quite a name for themselves, winning the Cairngorms Nature Farm award for their innovative grazing and land management practices. In their local area this dynamic pair are known for producing eggs and meat for sale and they are looking to expand the enterprise into poultry for meat, charcuterie and make the full transition to organic.

Mr Krause finished, "The Scottish Crofting Federation is grateful to all funders of the event and in particular to Moray LEADER, Big Lottery Awards for All and the MacRobert Trust. It is going to be a very inspirational event."

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Notes to editors

- Photographs of the nominees can be obtained by emailing hq@crofting.org
- The awards and weekend event is open for booking now. More information can be obtained from www.crofting.org/croftspirit