



NEWS RELEASE

Use: Immediate

Date: 09/10/2018

Federation event celebrates the role of young people in crofting

Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) was delighted to recognise young crofters with an awards ceremony at the 'Celebrating the Spirit of Crofting' event in Rothes, Moray last Friday.

The 'Euan MacRae Best Crofting Newcomer Award' is for new entrants with a keen interest in the land who may have made a start in crofting or are on the road to doing so. This award is named after Euan MacRae of Drumbeg, Sutherland, a young and infectious enthusiastic crofter who sadly passed away in summer 2017 just after his 19th birthday.

The 'Young Crofter of the Year Award' is aimed at those aged 40 and under who have taken their first steps on the crofting ladder or have established themselves in crofting, and are good examples of best practice and success within their field.

SCF chief executive, Patrick Krause, who compered the ceremony, said "We were very pleased to get the interest we did from our new and young crofters; it is quite daunting to stand up and be counted. The judges found it very difficult to narrow down to the short-list and almost impossible to pick the winners from the runners-up. However, the winners are outstanding crofters and very much deserve the prestige of the respective awards."

Euan's mother, Amanda MacRae, presented the award for Best Crofting Newcomer 2018 to Lynn Cassells and Sandra Baer from Lynbreck Croft in Strathspey. Lynn and Sandra arrived at Lynbreck, a 150-acre croft near Grantown-on-Spey, with a vision of 'farming with nature for healthy land and living'. They are determined to make a living entirely from their croft and have built up a mixed sheep and cattle herd recently to go with their rare breed pigs and hens, the latter producing in their 'eggmobile'. They are very keen to spread their message as far as possible, using social media, welcoming visitors and staging events on their croft.

Runner up for Best Crofting Newcomer went to Lucy Williams, who, with her husband Chris, run Tulloch Tea, a company growing and selling tea from a croft by Bonar Bridge, East Sutherland.

The Young Crofter 2018 award went to Domhnall MacSween from Ness, Lewis. Domhnall is better known to many as Sweeny from Ness, the busy and ebullient crofting entrepreneur from BBC Alba's Air an Lot programme, which features Domhnall as he goes about building and expanding his croft business – most of which is conducted in his native Gaelic. This business

now sees him despatching meat from pigs, sheep and cattle on his croft to all corners of Britain, as well as an impressive poultry empire. Domhnall quickly showed his delight at winning the award on social media, where he has already built a sizeable following. The award was presented by Rear Admiral Chris Hockley, Chief Executive of the MacRobert Trust who sponsored the prizes.

Runner-up for Young Crofter went to Beth Rose of Beechwood Croft in Invernesshire. Beth and her family work the 35 acre croft, which backs onto the Monadhliath mountains, stocking Shetland cattle, sheep, chickens, ducks and pigs.

Mr Krause concluded, "With these crofting recipients and standard bearers for young and newcoming crofters, all bursting with ideas and energy, it looks as if crofting is still in rude good health in many areas and we can dare to be more optimistic about its future."

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Notes to editors

- The judging panel comprised SCF chief executive Patrick Krause, crofting commissioner Mairi MacKenzie, Assynt crofter Amanda MacRae, rural skills trainer Brian Denoon and SCF training managers Tina Hartley and Lucy Beattie.
- The event 'Celebrating the Spirit of Crofting' was funded by Moray LEADER, National Lottery Awards for All, Princes Countryside Fund, NEWBIE and the MacRobert Trust. The MacRobert Trust sponsored the awards and donated prize money to the winning nominees.



- A print-quality picture can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>