

News Release
9 February 2022

*For immediate use*

**Saughland Farm awarded AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year**

The recipient of the prestigious AgriScot Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year award was announced on Wednesday 9 February.

The accolade, which is managed by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and sponsored by Thorntons Solicitors, was awarded to Saughland farm, run by Farm Manager Peter Eccles and Flock Manager Owen Gray.

Saughland Farm consists of 50-ha of arable land, 240ha of grassland and 40ha of woodland and hedgerows. Saughland has a maternal composite flock of 1,500 ewes using Romney and Aberfield with everything recorded from birth and 400 ewe lambs. A new pedigree Suffolk flock is being developed with the aim to produce an easy lambing, vigorous flock without compromising carcase quality and growth using CT Scanning, Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) and rigorous selection.

The lead assessor for the award, QMS Chair Kate Rowell, said that there were many aspects of the farm that stood out to her and her fellow assessors Hamish Dykes (AgriScot) and past AgriScot award recipient Kevin Stewart.

“I was extremely impressed with all three finalists, but Saughland’s in-depth understanding of the need for continual monitoring and improvement of the soil was strong.

“Their use of rotational grazing, where they were adapting numbers and classes of stock in the same field to get the most out of it at varying times of year demonstrated their eye for making the most of what they have to improve their efficiency and productivity.”

With a number of high-calibre entries, Saughland Farm edged out finalists Swinside Townfoot, run by Peter and Vicki Hedley in Jedburgh, and Attonburn Farm run by Robert and Becca Rennie in Yetholm.

Richard Callander owner of Saughland Farm said: “We are absolutely delighted to receive this prestigious award. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication that the whole team puts in each and every day.

“Our mission is to continue to build a resilient, sustainable, profitable and diversified agribusiness which is an inspiring place of work with increased opportunities for everyone involved with Saughland.”

AgriScot Chairman, Robert Neill, said: “We are grateful to all the farms that entered the AgriScot awards and their willingness to positively showcase Scotland’s agricultural sector. Huge congratulations to our finalists, and the 2021 Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year, Saughland Farm.”

As well as demonstrating a high standard of technical and financial performance, those assessing the farms looked for evidence of the uptake of new ideas to improve efficiency and profitability and whether the businesses had an eye on the market for the end product.

The farms were also assessed on the passion and enthusiasm of the farmer and others involved in the business, to efficiently produce high quality animals.

Kenneth Mackay, partner and head of the Land and Rural Business team at Thorntons, said: “These awards champion an industry which has the highest welfare and environmental standards in the world. We’re proud to help support AgriScot and recognise the achievements of those within the agricultural sector. Congratulations to the exceptional finalists and reciepent of the Scottish Sheep Farm of the Year title for 2021.”

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

This press release was issued by Jane Craigie Marketing on behalf of Quality Meat Scotland. For additional press information, please contact Alana on 07596 122184 or alana@janecraigie.com.

To download a word version of this press release, please click here.

QMS is the public body responsible for promoting the PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and abroad and also promoting Scottish pork products under the Specially Selected Pork logo.

Please note that the use of the word Scotch in the Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI brands is correct and should not be substituted for an alternative such as Scots or Scottish. The history of the use of the word Scotch in this way, traces back to the 18th century.

QMS also helps the Scottish red meat sector improve its sustainability, efficiency and profitability and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.

The quality assurance schemes run by QMS cover more than 90% of livestock farmed for red meat in Scotland. They offer consumers in the UK and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to some of the world’s strictest welfare standards.

Scotland’s beef, lamb and pork producers make an important contribution to the country’s economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing over £2 billion to the annual GDP of Scotland and supporting around 50,000 jobs (many in fragile rural areas) in the farming, agricultural supply and processing sectors.

For more information visit www.qmscotland.co.uk or follow QMS on Facebook or Twitter.