

Press Release

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*For immediate use*

**Young livestock auctioneers link up to look to future of the mart**

A group of young auctioneers from competing businesses across Scotland came together with the Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland (IAAS) to discuss how the livestock sector is evolving, selling through the marts and what will secure their future.

The fourteen young auctioneers met for their inaugural meeting at Strathisla Farms near Meigle, where they were given an insight into the mixed farming enterprise managed by Adrian Ivory and the opportunity to meet Quality Meat Scotland’s (QMS) new Chief Executive, Sarah Millar.

Neil Wilson, Executive Director of IAAS, who organised the event with ANM Group Director and IAAS board member Alan Hutcheon, said:

“It’s essential for the success and the succession of the industry that the young people are stepping up to shape its future. The aim of the Young Auctioneers Group, which has been three years in the coming due to covid, is to create an environment where we can look beyond the day job, spark dynamic discussion and blue sky thinking to create a strong vision for the future of Scotland’s livestock marts.”

Mr Hutcheon, who was an auctioneer for 33 years and now heads up one of the largest farmer-owned auction businesses in the UK, added:

“I am delighted that it was unanimously voted to continue the group after this meeting. We are working toward offering a seat at the IAAS board table for the chair of the group which will create valuable co-mentoring. The chair will represent younger members in the industry and at the same time be exposed to the experience of the other board members, all of which will feed into ensuring this vital part of the red meat sector remains robust and relevant.”

Adrian Ivory gave an insight into how he collects and uses data to manage his mixed farming enterprise, which includes owned and contracted land. Integrating livestock and cereals, he uses the comprehensive data he notes down on birth dates, birthing ease, weaning ratios and market prices to decide his breeding strategy. This is in conjunction with conversations with his customers about what traits they are looking for and allows him to refine his breeding and feeding to what is needed in the marketplace, making efficiencies by planning ahead and avoiding unnecessary excess.

Sarah Millar, who took up post in April, laid out her vision for QMS as the red meat levy board in Scotland, acknowledging the role of livestock auctioneers on both economic and social levels, and the challenges that the industry needs to overcome.

The now formed Young Auctioneers Group, which is open to any IAAS member aged 40 years and under, will meet quarterly. This will include a mix of visits to businesses in the red meat supply chain to better understand how they operate and their direction of travel, discussion sessions, challenging thinking and time for a social. A committee of three will be formed from the group to steer the programme in conjunction with Neil Wilson, who will organise the events on behalf of the group and IAAS. A chair will be appointed from the committee to join the IAAS board.

Livestock Office Manager at Wallets Marts, Judith Cowie, said:

“Coming from different auction houses, we are all in competition with each other, but we are also working towards the same goal - a thriving livestock industry centred around the auction marts. The traditional element of the marts is both mainstay and risk. It is vital to fair trade in the red meat sector, and what allows producers to be price makers rather than takers, but we need to be conscious of what’s coming down the line and continue to evolve. This is why a core aspect of this group will be meeting with others in the supply chain. Seeing how Adrian is collecting and using data to make really well-informed decisions and what matters to him as a producer has been a great insight. It’s been a really interesting start and I look forward to seeing how we can work together to keep the industry progressive, relevant and integral to the sector.”

**For more information or to join the group, contact Neil Wilson on** [**info@iaas.co.uk**](mailto:info@iaas.co.uk)**.**

**ENDS**

Notes to Editor:

**About IAAS**

The Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers in Scotland (IAAS) is the representative body for livestock markets, valuers and auctioneers across Scotland. We fight for the interests of those markets and the central role they play in the working of the rural and agricultural economy. www.iaas.co.uk