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**Press Release**

[14 November 2022]

**UK’s leading agricultural conference supports food and farming professionals through bursary programme.**

The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) has announced the 17 recipients who will receive an Inspire Programme bursary, supporting ambitious candidates from rural and agri-food sectors.

In addition to a fully funded ticket to the event in January, themed “Farming a New Future”, the group will participate in a two-day networking and skills development workshop, supported by programme sponsor TIAH.

Now in its fifth year, Inspire has supported nearly 100 individuals to develop their own leadership journey, with many of them taking on key roles within their own business and the wider industry including with OFC, NFU, NFU Scotland, AHDB, QMS, The Allerton Project, and LEAF, to name but a few.

Selected following an open application process, the 2023 cohort comes from across the UK, with careers in arable, beef, sheep, goats, poultry, forestry, tourism, agri-tech, finance, education, water and the environment. They include a farm manager supporting disadvantaged young people through residential stays on-farm, a marketing professional working with agri-technologies, a training and development officer for an agricultural well-being charity, a water catchment advisor, and a rural business consultant supporting future farming.

Commenting on the appointments, OFC Director and Inspire Programme Lead, Will Evans said,

*“The OFC Inspire Programme offers the space and time for individuals to reflect, connect and build plans for their future. As a previous participant in 2018, it helped inspire me to make positive changes to my own business, whilst making lifelong friends and giving me the confidence to apply for a Directorship with OFC.*

*“It has been designed to provide an inclusive and welcoming forum for anyone actively involved in the rural, food and farming sector, who might be looking for their next career step, make changes to their own enterprise, or gain confidence and skills so they can play a more active role within the industry.”*

*Charles Goadby, who participated in the 2022 programme found this particularly beneficial,*

*“There are very few opportunities you get where you can be with such a diverse spectrum of the agricultural industry, all so passionate about what they do, but also so open, and listening, to each other's thoughts and perspectives.  I've constantly felt encouraged and supported to be open with my thoughts and views and know that, as with everyone else's, a good honest and transparent discussion is there to be had and explore those ideas more.”*

The group will meet in December, and then attend the OFC from 4 to 6 January 2023, in Oxford. They include:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Forename** | **Surname** | **Career** | **Location** |
| Rebecca | Carter | Water Catchment Advisor | Cambridgeshire |
| Iona | Corbett | Training and Development Officer | Warwickshire |
| Chris | Dickinson | Farmer | Cumbria |
| Beth | Duchesne | Rural Business Advisor | Suffolk |
| Christina | Dutton | College Lecturer - Agriculture | Walford? |
| Matthew | Griffin | Farm Manager | Peebleshire |
| Rob | Groves | Farm Manager | Dorset |
| Georgina | Knock | Agricultural Marketer | Suffolk |
| Tillie | Lackie | Agricultural Consultant | Staffordshire |
| Heather | Oldfield | Seed Business Development Manager | Lincolnshire |
| Will | Oliver | Farmer | Leicestershire |
| James | Rhys | Farmer | Dumfries and Galloway |
| Victoria | Shervington-Jones | Farmer | Gwent |
| Andrew | Sincock | Director & Owner, Agricultural Inputs Company | Somerset |
| Dan | Smith | Farm Manager | Monmouthshire |
| Matthew | Stubbings | Regional Crop Manager | North Yorkshire |
| Liz | Warner | Farmer | Devon |

To find out more about OFC 2023, taking place from 4 to 6 January, visit [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk).

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**Notes to Editors:**

* For more information on the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC):

**Website:** [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk/)

**Twitter:**[@oxfordfarming](http://www.twitter.com/oxfordfarming)

**YouTube:** [OxfordFarmingConference](https://www.youtube.com/oxfordfarmingconference)

* The [Council](https://www.ofc.org.uk/council) is made up of 10 voluntary directors. The OFC 2023 Chair is Emily Norton.
* OFC is held annually in January over three days and includes a vibrant programme of speakers, panel sessions, politics sessions and easy networking.
* The 77th conference will take place from the 4 to 6 January 2023 in Oxford and online. A programme of fringes will also be available, online, in December 2022.
* OFC has established a reputation for strong debate and exceptional speakers.
* OFC is a charity that invests in the agricultural education and knowledge-sharing. It attracts over 650 delegates every year, including many people from the wider food chain, retail, NGOs, scientific organisations, media, policy-making bodies and governments from around the world.
* With HRH Princess Royal as its patron, OFC is a charity with a remit to educate and transfer knowledge in the agricultural sector. As part of its charitable undertakings, the OFC sponsors young people to attend the conference, to travel overseas and it seeks to develop emerging leaders.