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**Press release**

\*for immediate release\*

[9 November 2022]

**AgriScot announces finalists for Business Skills Competition**

**Three finalists have been revealed for the AgriScot Business Skills Competition, sponsored by NFU Mutual and supported by Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC).**

The competition, which aims to assess general business skills and awareness of topical agricultural issues, was open to anyone aged 18-25. With soaring costs, staff recruitment struggles, food security concerns and supply chain demands, to name but a few of the challenges facing the industry, initial entry was by submission of a CV and a response to the statement: *“The importance of Agri-business managers developing more resilient businesses”.*

From responses received, competitors were then whittled down to a shortlist and invited to compete in an on-farm semi-final, with heats taking place in north and south regions of Scotland between 21st-22nd October. Activities involved a farm walk and subsequent response to practical farm and business management questions. The successful candidates, who will now go on to compete at AgriScot for the coveted title and £1000 cash prize, are:

**Rhona Campbell Crawford** – Is from Crieff and is a fourth year BSc (hons) Agriculture student at SRUC Edinburgh. Not originally from a farming background, Rhona has worked hard to gain multiple experiences across the industry and develop her technical knowledge. Currently working part-time for SAC Consulting, an active member of her local young farmers club and running a small flock of sheep of her own, Rhona aspires to become a full-time consultant upon completion of her studies. Last month, Rhona was named Agricultural Student of the Year at the British Farming Awards.

**Jennifer Davidson –** Is also a final year BSc (hons) Agriculture student at SRUC’s Aberdeen campus. Jennifer has enjoyed a role as an Arable/Poultry Assistant on a local farm near Turriff for the past three years, additionally working as a lambing assistant on a pedigree Suffolk breeder farm and applying the skills gained from rearing her own flock of pedigree Texels. Having held a range of positions with her local Young Farmers club over the years, Jennifer is also a qualified Highland Dancing teacher and continues to enjoy success with competitions across the whole of UK.

**Jack Young –** From Carluke, Lanarkshire, studied agriculture at both SRUC Barony and Oatridge campuses. After spending some time travelling New Zealand, Jack returned home to work on the family farm full time. He is also an active member of his local Young Farmers club.

The final phase of the competition will take place live at AgriScot on November 16th. The competitors will evaluate a new product being launched as part of the [Product Innovation Award](https://agriscot.co.uk/product-innovation-award-2/#:~:text=The%20AgriScot%20Product%20Innovation%20Award%20is%20designed%20to%20encourage%20new,trade%20stands%20at%20the%20event.), creating a presentation based on their assessment, and showcasing their ideas to a judging panel who will also ask them a range of questions on business skills, topical agricultural issues and assess how they are developing their CV.

The judging panel on the day will be formed of Annabel Hamilton, AgriScot Director; George Baikie, Head of SRUC farms and Ian Hope of Galbraiths.

Heather Kerr, SRUC lecturer and AgriScot Business Skills Coordinator, commented on this year’s competition:

“The ageing population of the agricultural sector is a very real and documented threat, but it is reassuring to see an eager, talented and competent group of youngsters emerge on the agri-business scene, keen to advance their skills and contribute positively to the industry.

“We received an incredibly high calibre of entrants from a wide range of backgrounds this year, each demonstrating interesting and unique perspectives on farm business resilience. I’m looking forward to seeing what our contenders produce on 16th November and wish them the very best of luck for the final stage.”

Mark McBrearty, NFU Mutual Regional Manager in Scotland added: “With the agricultural landscape rapidly and continuously evolving, agri-business managers must be suitably equipped to not only cope with the change, but to thrive.

“This competition is a fantastic way for the next generation to put their skills into practice and to demonstrate how they can successfully lead our farming and rural communities into the future.”

For more information on AgriScot and to register for your free ticket, visit: <https://agriscot.co.uk/registration/>

**-Ends-**

For more information, to arrange an interview or press enquiries, please contact Rose Moggach via [rose@janecraigie.com](mailto:rose@janecraigie.com) or 07493 876646

**Notes to editors:**

AgriScot takes place on Wednesday, 16th November 2022, at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston. The awards will be presented at this event.

Exhibitor stands for AgriScot 2022 have now sold out, but space for seminars is still available. Contact [info@agriscot.co.uk](mailto:info@agriscot.co.uk) for more information

AgriScot is free to attend, and registration is open at [www.agriscot.co.uk](http://www.agriscot.co.uk/)

The event is organised by Rural Projects.

**AgriScot Dairy Cattle Classes sponsors include:** ABS, Ayrshire Cattle Services, Arla, CIS, Cogent, Datamars, Davidsons Animal Feeds, Farmplan, Fullwoodhead Dairy Supplies, Genus, Holstein UK, Kilpatrick & Walker, Krone, McCaskie Farm Supplies, Moredun, Norvite, NWF, Power Washer Services, Semex, Thomas Sherriff, Yara UK

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