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*For immediate use*

*08* June 2022

**Ballindalloch gathers sheep farmers together for uplands discussion**

State-of-the-art technology which measures greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in sheep, will be on display at a special event in the heart of Speyside, this July.

David and Susan Johnstone, who manage Ballindalloch Home Farm, are to play host to a day of discussion and knowledge exchange on July 4, narrowing in on the topic, ‘Sheep in the Uplands.’

The technical day, organised by SAC Consulting, part of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), will provide delegates with information on combatting OPA in flocks, addressing drought resilience in upland sheep systems and will stress the importance of getting records right. These topics plus many more, will take place during the morning, as farmers make their way around interactive stations, hearing from industry specialists.

One of the huge draws of the day will be a first time look at the Portable Accumulation Chambers (PAC) which are currently being used by SRUC researchers, with delegates having the opportunity to hear first-hand about the latest in GHG emissions technology and to discuss what this may offer to the future of sheep farming.

During lunch, there will be an opportunity to take part in stock judging and for farmers to hear more about Ballindalloch’ s relatively new but fast-growing flock of sheep, but also about their well-established and famous Aberdeen Angus cattle herd, which is one of the oldest in the world.

The afternoon will comprise of what promises to be a lively panel discussion, hosted by chair of SAC Consulting’s Commercial Board and Scottish entrepreneur Denis Overton, exploring the question, ‘How does the Scottish sheep industry prepare for the future?’ An excellent line-up of panellists will include former Head of Market Intelligence at QMS Stuart Ashworth, SRUC’s Head of Integrated Land Management Davy McCracken and well-known sheep farmers Rod McKenzie and Amy-Jo Reid.

Chairing the day’s activities will be SAC Consulting’s Kirsten Williams, who said: “We are really looking forward to welcoming farmers to Speyside and to seize this opportunity to share some short and long-term practical tips, knowing how unstable the marketplace can be and the importance of futureproofing the industry.

“There will be invaluable conversations on the day, aimed specifically at those farming in the uplands, everything from ensuring producers are ready for sheep inspections – what pitfalls to avoid – to better understanding losses on the hill and combatting OPA, which is such a huge challenge to many of our flocks.

“It is also very exciting to have the PAC technology on the farm, as it is so important to demonstrate what research is happening within the GHG emissions space and how this will translate to farmers on the ground.”

Ballindalloch Highland Estate is owned by the Macpherson Grant family and within its surrounding 6700ha, lies Ballindalloch farm, managed by David and Susan Johnstone.

David and Susan ventured into sheep in 2017 and have since built up their flock to include 550 breeding ewes, mainly Cheviot mules and Texel crosses, with some progeny kept as replacements and the rest sold as gimmers.

“We are really looking forward to welcoming everyone to Ballindalloch this summer for the ‘Sheep in the uplands event’ and we hope farmers will take the opportunity to pick up some new ideas and techniques they can take home to their own flocks,” said Susan.

“It will also be some light relief for farmers to get together after a long late spring and it is an exciting opportunity for us to shine a light on the sheep side of our business, as most people will know us for our Aberdeen Angus cattle. We have been building the flock over the last six years, with plans to increase numbers again this year and look forward to sharing some of our journey on the day.”

The event is free to attend and will take place between 10.15 and 15.30 on Tuesday, July 4 and is funded by the University Innovation Fund from the Scottish Funding Council.

Interested participants are urged to register for catering purposes by phoning SAC Consulting Elgin on 01343 548 787 or can book online at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sheep-in-the-uplands-tickets-620603179817>

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors:**

Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) was established in 2012 through the merger of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) with Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge Colleges. Through these institutions, we can trace our lineage back over 100 years.

Today, SRUC is on a journey to become Scotland’s enterprise university at the heart of our sustainable natural economy. Our mission is to create and mobilise knowledge and talent – partnering locally and globally to benefit Scotland’s natural economy.

To achieve this, we draw upon SRUC’s longstanding strengths in world-class and sector-leading research, learning and teaching, skills and training and consultancy (through SAC Consulting).

As part of SRUC, SAC Consulting provides independent, research-driven, industry-leading expertise, advice, and solutions for agricultural, food, and land-based businesses. With 24 offices and an experienced, expert team, it provides local support, tailored to its customers, nationally.

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