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| **Press Release** | 00/00/00 |

Community and profitability leads to success for the winners of the 2023 Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability.

Matthew and Lloyd Smith from F Smith and Sons, Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire have been announced as the winners of the 2023 Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability.

Now in its second year, the accolade celebrates individuals and businesses that deliver on all three pillars of sustainability – people, profit and planet.

The Smith brothers are third-generation farmers, having inherited the farm from their father 18 years ago. The 450-acre enterprise has a wide rotation, growing twelve crops, including wheat, barley, potatoes, sugar beet, beans, sunflowers, linseed and millet. The rotation is to support their strategy to reduce the farm’s high black-grass weed pressure, improve their soil organic matter, and provide diversity within their landscape, enhancing and attracting wildlife and biodiversity.

Their practical approach to sustainability, only owning and contracting land that they can manage between the two of them, has ensured they make the right decisions at the right time.

Reflecting on what sustainability means to him, Matthew said, “ It’s about people, the environment and everything linked to it. It is about collaborations and partnerships, building long-term connections and loyalty with our customers, local residents and industry. Most of all sustainability is about developing the farm for the future.”

To build connections, the farm hosted a sunflower walk in 2022 welcoming nearly 600 visitors from the local area and raised £1000 for the Air Ambulance Trust. Visitors had the opportunity to speak to Matthew and Lloyd, and learn more about what happens on farm, and why.

Their new business venture, [Spadger Bird Seeds](https://www.instagram.com/spadgerbirdseed/), further adds to the duo’s commitment to connect with the public, whilst also ensuring financial sustainability for the farm.

*“Over the last decade we have seen a significant increase in the number of birds on farm”,* said Lloyd. *“It sparked the idea for the business, as seed is the only crop we grow that we can use to interact with the public all-year and offers another opportunity for future generations to get involved in the business, should they wish. They also require lower inputs, making the investment one that is supported by strong business viability.”*

The award was presented at an event highlighting the 15 years of partnership and sustainability projects between Andrew and William Pitts and BASF at The Grange in Northampton. Commenting on the award, Matthew and Lloyd said,

“We are so proud to pick up this award today and celebrate our sustainability journey to date. The recognition supports our belief in everything we are doing to preserve and protect the countryside whilst also farming in a profitable way. If just one person hears about our story, and it contributes to a positive change, that to us is truly delivering sustainability.”

Will Oliver from Swepstone Fields Farm in Leicestershire was the Sustainability Award runner-up. Farming with his father, the mixed enterprise includes arable, poultry, commercial lets, and a glamping business. They take a zero tolerance to grass-weeds, delay drill to improve crop performance, use renewable energy to reduce their operating costs and have integrated sheep back into their rotation, grazing their cover crops.

Mike Green, Agricultural Sustainability Manager at BASF presented the award alongside Joel Johnson, BASF Agricultural Solutions Business Director for the UK and Ireland. Commenting on the finalists, he said,

“We were truly overwhelmed by the applications this year, and the incredible work taking place on farms right across the UK to support sustainability, at all levels. After visiting Will, Matthew and Lloyd, the judges found it incredibly difficult to select the winner and I would like to pass on my congratulations to both families.

“Their strong desire to ensure their land is left better than when they found it, enhancing and protecting the environment, whilst also producing nutritious food in a profitable way, really reflects the core intentions of the award.”

Matthew and Lloyd received a commemorative award plate, as well as a year’s membership to the Institute of Agricultural Management, a year’s membership to Farm491, a ticket to the Oxford Farming Conference 2024 and access to BASF Sustainability experts, who will provide guidance and support for any future plans.

The award was hosted by BASF, in partnership with Farm491 and the Institute of Agricultural Management. The judges included representatives from each of the partners and the competition’s inaugural winner, Colin Chappell.

To find out more about the finalists, you can watch their video interviews:

* [Matthew and Lloyd Smith Video Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtIDIKX4_7A&feature=youtu.be)
* [Will Oliver Video Interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUwNn_UJDq0)

**About BASF’s Agricultural Solutions division**   
Farming is fundamental to provide enough healthy and affordable food for a rapidly growing population while reducing environmental impacts.Working with partners and agricultural experts andby integratingsustainability criteria into all business decisions, we help farmers to create a positive impact on sustainable agriculture. That’s why we invest in a strong R&D pipeline, connecting innovative thinking with practical action in the field. Our portfolio comprises seeds and specifically selected plant traits, chemical and biological crop protection, solutions for soil management, plant health, pest control and digital farming. With expert teams in the lab, field, office and in production, we strive to find the right balance for success – for farmers, agriculture and future generations. In 2021, our division generated sales of €8.2 billion. For more information, please visit [www.agriculture.basf.com](https://agriculture.basf.com/global/en.html) or any of our social media channels.

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