

**Press Release**

[for immediate release]

**Agriculture’s international spotlight to shine on Scotland.**

Tickets have gone on sale for an international agricultural conference with Royal roots being hosted in Scotland.

The Princess Royal is patron of the 30th Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC) Conference, an organisation which was founded in 1957 by her father, the late Duke of Edinburgh Prince Phillip. He served as President of the society for half a century before handing over the reins to Princess Anne.

54 different countries expected to include Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, Uganda, Canada, India and Jamaica will have around 250 representatives at the Edinburgh-based conference between Tuesday 25th to Thursday 27th June 2024.

John Bennett, an Australian farmer and trustee of RASC, said the covid-forced cancellation of the last conference, in 2020, has resulted in a great deal of excitement about next year’s event.

“I am very much looking forward to coming to Scotland for the 2024 conference,” he said.

“To anybody wondering about buying a ticket, my simple message is get yourself there. I have been attending since 2004 and have yet to meet anybody who hasn’t enjoyed themselves or had their money’s worth from the great ideas they have returned home with.

“It doesn’t matter whereabouts in the world somebody comes from, if you are interested in agriculture or are part of an agricultural show society you will find plenty to talk about. It never ceases to amaze me how much we all have in common and I will be forever grateful for the network of people around the world that I can give a call to, or send an email, to ask for their help and advice. Working together has never been more important than at the moment with challenges such as climate change; it’s vital to be aware of scientific developments - to get the global picture.”

John first attended the conference as a Next Generation delegate as a result of his involvement with his local agricultural show and organisers are keen to encourage under 35s to sign up and maybe consider applying for a scholarship place.

“The first conference for me was in Australia,” he remembers. “Two years later and I was in Calgary and what an amazing opportunity it was. It’s easy within agriculture to get blinkered and only think about your own farm and part of the world. It’s vital for the future of agriculture that the next generation get involved.”

Sir Nicholas Bacon, RASC chairman, echoed the importance of the conference’s Next Generation sessions.

“We recognise that today’s young are the leaders of tomorrow,” he said.

“One of the biggest problems in agriculture is attracting the next generation into farming and it is wonderful to bring younger people together and see how many ideas they come up with.

“RASC is the only organisation to support and promote agriculture throughout the commonwealth and it’s so vital we keep up its valuable work. If you fill a room with people from all over the world but they have agriculture in common it is amazing to see how soon they are chattering away; exchanging ideas and experiences.”

The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland has been instrumental in securing the conference, which is traditionally held every two years and draws the bulk of its delegates from agricultural show societies across the world.

This year’s landmark event will have the theme *Growing a Commonwealth* and gatherspeakers, sessions, and topics from across the Commonwealth at Edinburgh’s Gogarburn Conference Centre. A Gala Dinner will be hosted in the members’ pavilion of the Royal Highland Showground and for those who arrive in Scotland before the actual conference, there will be farm visits and guided tours, along with the chance to attend the Royal Highland Show.

Optional pre-conference tours will include a visit to the yard of Grand National winning racehorse trainer Lucinda Russell OBE, the farm of a traditional Aberdeen Angus breeder who exports genetics all over the world, Scotland’s only commercial strawberry grower, an on-farm distillery, a world-leading agricultural science organisation, along with the 3,000-acre Balcaskie Estate.

Apart from the exchange of ideas on the secure and sustainable use of the world’s natural resources, the RASC’s mission is to promote the development of agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and the rural environment. In addition to improving farming standards and the rural economy, the conference aims to improve awareness among the general public and consumers about agriculture and rural concerns. Another aim is to encourage and support farming and the rural economy’s message.

For further information including sponsorship opportunities, please visit <https://www.therasc.com/>

**[End]**

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact:

* Sarah Todd – sarah@janecraigie.com
* Rebecca Dawes – rebecca@janecraigie.com

**Notes to editors:**

*[Roll of Honour: RASC Conferences](https://www.outbrain.com/what-is/default/en)*

1967 Toronto, Canada
1968 Nairobi, Kenya
1971 Edinburgh, Scotland
1973 Christchurch, New Zealand
1975 Aberystwyth, Wales
1977 Part 1 - Regina, Western Canada, Part 2 - Ocho Rios, Jamaica
1979 Perth, Western Australia

1981 Bath, England
1983 Lusaka, Zambia
1985 Melbourne, Australia
1989 Nairobi, Kenya
1990 Peterborough, England
1992 Calgary, Western Canada
1994 Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
1996 Chester, England
1998 Darwin, Australia

2001 Durban, South Africa
2002 Belfast, Northern Ireland
2004 Albury, Australia
2006 Calgary, Western Canada
2008 Christchurch, New Zealand
2010 Edinburgh, Scotland
2012 Zambia, Africa
2014 Brisbane, Australia
2016 Singapore, Malaysia
2018 Edmonton, Canada