Press release

Date 0/02/24

*For immediate use*

**Farming agreements - a match made in acres. Find your match at the Roxburghshire Monitor Farm winter meeting.**

As part of the Roxburghshire Monitor Farm project, the farming community is invited to a panel discussion evening, about farming agreements, being held at the Buccleuch Arms in St. Boswells on Wednesday 21st February at 7pm.

Roxburghshire Monitor Farmer, Robert Wilson will kick off the meeting with an update on his Monitor Farm journey and his business aims for 2024 and beyond. Attendees will then hear from specialists and farmers involved with various farming agreements, to find out how different options work, and what might work best for their business.

Robert said: “With changes coming to agreements over some of the land we farm, we've benefited from being able to discuss how best we might approach these, within our Monitor Farm management group. We're delighted to welcome farmers to share their story about how different approaches to partnerships and agreements have been utilised. This will help others navigate change and hopefully provide thoughts on an alternative point of access to those looking to develop within the agricultural sector.”

Speakers at the event will include farmers Annabel Hamilton, Robert Playfair-Hannay, and Ali Freeland-Cook, along with the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society's (SAOS) David Michie.

Annabel, along with her family, manages 2,700 acres (1,093ha) on the East Berwickshire coast. The business mainly operates under contract farming agreements and relies on trust with landowners, as well as robust financial decisions.

In the Borders, Robert Playfair-Hannay runs a beef, sheep, and arable enterprise in partnership with his parents. The operation covers 4,300 acres (1,740ha), carrying 400 head of Aberdeen Angus, Angus crosses and Beef Shorthorn suckler cows, as well as 1,500 North Country Cheviot sheep and 600 acres of arable cropping. In addition, they run a 750 acre (304ha) arable unit in Fife, which also houses bed and breakfast pigs. There are two full time employees and three to four seasonal staff.

Farmer, Ali Freeland-Cook, oversees six farms with various contract farming agreements and 5,200 lambing ewes plus 450 lambing ewe hoggs. Around 1,200 ewes lamb indoors in late Feb/March, with the remainder lambing outside on various grazing systems. 140 Hereford x Salers suckler cows help to diversify the enterprise. Ali also manages a machinery contracting business, involving woodland work, road building for harvest traffic, drainage, shed preparation, and silage contracting as well as grass and fodder crop establishment.

SAOS Co-op Development Manager, David Michie helps to develop co-op businesses, and supports farmers with knowledge transfer.

Jack Frater, a member of the Monitor Farm management group at Cowbog in Roxburghshire and Agricultural Consultant at Edwin Thompson, will chair the panel meeting. Jack is involved with all aspects of farm and estate management, including overseeing in-hand farming operations, management and administration of contract farming agreements, financial planning, and subsidy claim submissions. Jack grew up on the family farm near Alnwick in Northumberland and has a wealth of practical livestock and arable farming knowledge and experience.

Monitor Farm Regional Advisor, Maura Wilson said: “This is a brilliant opportunity for the farming community to join. It will be great to hear from speakers with such experience and I encourage farmers to attend and to get involved and ask as many questions as you can.”

To book a place at this meeting visit: farmingagreements.eventbrite.co.uk the [Monitor Farm Scotland website](https://www.monitorfarms.co.uk/farms/) or by contacting Maura Wilson on 07721677556 /monitorfarm@qmscotland.co.uk

**Ends**

**Word count 569**

**Notes to editors:**

About Monitor Farm Scotland:

· The Monitor Farm Scotland programme is managed by Quality Meat Scotland with support from AHDB.

· The programme is fully funded by the Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer Innovation Fund.

· The nine farms chosen to take part in this four-year programme reflect the diverse tapestry of livestock and mixed farming across Scotland.

· The aim of the programme is to help to farms reach full economic, social, and environmental sustainability by optimising production.

· The programme is farmer led and farmer driven with support from specialists and experts to assess farm performance, explore opportunities, and develop solutions to the challenges faced.

· Each Monitor Farm will be steered by a management group of 10 to 12 farming businesses with support from the local community group.

· The learnings and the example set by Monitor farms aims to benefit farmers across the whole of Scotland.

· The programme is managed by an in-house delivery team, who are funded through the programme and managed by QMS.

· For more information visit: https://www.monitorfarms.co.uk/

About QMS:

QMS is the public body responsible for promoting the PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and abroad and also promoting Scottish pork products under the Specially Selected Pork logo.

Please note that the use of the word Scotch in the Scotch Beef PGI and Scotch Lamb PGI brands is correct and should not be substituted for an alternative such as Scots or Scottish. The history of the use of the word Scotch in this way, traces back to the 18th century.

QMS also helps the Scottish red meat sector improve its sustainability, efficiency and profitability and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.

The quality assurance schemes run by QMS cover more than 90% of livestock farmed for red meat in Scotland. They offer consumers in the UK and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to some of the world’s strictest welfare standards.

Scotland’s beef, lamb and pork producers make an important contribution to the country’s economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing over £2 billion to the annual GDP of Scotland and supporting around 50,000 jobs (many in fragile rural areas) in the farming, agricultural supply and processing sectors.

For more information visit www.qmscotland.co.uk or follow QMS on Facebook or Twitter.