**PRESS RELEASE: for immediate use**

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**Farmlay’s longest standing employee says Farmlay is an egg-cellent firm to work for**

Farmlay’s General Manager and longest standing employee, Lesley Arnott, has spent 26 years working at Cockmuir Farm, near Strichen, and shares her experience as a valued team member of the family-owned business, reflecting on how the business has evolved and grown over the years.

Lesley comes from a farming background, and lives with her husband on their mixed arable and cattle farm, outside Fraserburgh. She began her career with Farmlay as an egg packer in August 1998 – following a job advertisement with “perfect” working hours of Monday to Friday 9:30am – 2:30pm.

“The hours fitted around school pick-up and were precisely what I needed to earn money, whilst juggling life as the mother of two,” reflects Lesley.

Just a few months after joining, Lesley was promoted into the office to cover maternity leave. Her innate ability to solve problems, whilst learning quickly on the job, were soon recognised and, when the maternity cover was over, she remained in her administrative position, with the addition of taking on the all-important quality control (QC) management role.

“Being a family-run business, our management team is approachable and considerate of team members, they spot skills and interests and place them accordingly. In my experience, the Chapmans always aim to accommodate their team’s asks as best as they can, whilst continuing to run a professional and successful business.”

In 2007, Lesley became the General Manager, allowing her to flit between QC, attending to team members’ needs, covering leave, placing orders, admin, and the running of the egg graders.

“The grader is a fabulous piece of machinery that is very interesting to watch. It recognises the size and weight of egg, detects any cracks and dirt, and uses a UV lamp to disinfect the outer shell,” explains Lesley.

“The team at Farmlay are very excited as we welcomed the new AI grader last month. We were running at full capacity with our existing grader and, with more hens to accommodate, we have more eggs and therefore required another machine to keep up with demand from our customers.

“It will also help with managing our lines - time is lost when resetting the grader to process organic to free-range eggs and vice versa. With two machines, a reset will no longer be necessary. We will be able to double production in a shorter time frame, while also creating more jobs to manage the grading within the business.”

Once upon a time, Lesley would have overseen just about everything, but as the business continues to expand, the role is now supported by a dispatch and intake manager. Her daughter Debbie is married to Farmlay’s Managing Director, Iain Chapman.

Iain says: “Lesley adds a huge contribution to the everyday running and decision-making processes of the business and, over her years with the business, her career progression and growth in responsibility demonstrate the wide range of opportunities we have at Farmlay.”

“Working for what is now my family, is of course a huge pull to staying motivated – but being recognised as a valued member of the team, utilising my problem-solving skills, and facing something different every day is what has kept me coming back every day,” comments Lesley.

“It is a joy to watch first-hand how much the business has expanded over the years. I love receiving a big order at the start of the working week and successfully packaging up all the eggs to go out for distribution – it’s a satisfying task, and one I haven’t taken for granted – we are proud of our quality eggs.”

“I have always been treated holistically, even before we became a family. There is a reason I have stayed here for so long and it’s not just because of the free eggs we get to take home at the end of the week,” adds Lesley, who finishes by saying that her favourite way to eat eggs is poached on top of smoked salmon - especially on Christmas morning.

For anyone interesting in working with Farmlay, please email careers@farmlay.co.uk.

**-Ends-**

**Notes to Editor:**

Established in 1946, Farmlay is a family-owned egg producing business based in rural Aberdeenshire. The business and it’s 70 team members has 1 million hens in production, producing over 5 million eggs every week. The Chapman family, who founded and run the business, have 450k laying hens themselves and 26 contract producers who account for the other half of the business's production. Farmlay supplies Lidl, Aldi, Spar and a number of retailers and wholesalers across Scotland.

Press releases are issued on behalf of Farmlay by Jane Craigie Marketing.

Issued on behalf of Farmlay. For more information contact Iain Chapman, Managing Director on 01346 532276 or info@farmlay.co.uk or alternatively Jane Craigie on 01466 780078 or jane@janecraigie.com.