David Felce wins 2025 Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability

* Cambridgeshire farmer David Felce wins 2025 Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability
* Award in partnership with The Andersons Centre was requested for the FASTAC, The Country Trust and The Royal Entomological Society
* Judges praise Felce for collaboration, biodiversity income streams and an impeccable sustainability mindset

A farmer who “lives and breathes sustainable practices” has had his lifelong passion for integrating farming and nature recognised. The Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability was presented at a day of celebrating the farmers who are deeply invested in the three tenets of sustainability – people, profit and planet.

The event was held at the Beaver family’s Rutland Vineyard on 9 July 2025.

Organised by BASF, in partnership with The Andersons Centre, the Country Trust and the Royal Entomological Society, the award was open to any grower implementing outstanding sustainable farming practices.

Speaking on behalf of the judges – previous award winners Mat and Lloyd Smith and a team member from each of the partners - Alice Johnston, BASF’s Agricultural Sustainability Manager for UK and Ireland said: “The calibre of our finalists was exceptional. Our visit to each business highlighted what’s achievable when a farmer understands their land and how to complement production agriculture with enhancing the wide diversity of flora and fauna that each farm supports.

“The judges selected David to win because of his broad delivery on every aspect of sustainable agriculture, particularly his soil health, commitment to water catchment management, wildlife species diversity and his full embrace of integrated pest management.”

David Felce has worked and lived on the family farm all his life and has prioritised collaboration to benefit all aspects of his business. Located in a secluded place, his investment in conserving and improving Midloe Grange Farm, Huntingdonshire, for wildlife has included widening the range and types of habitats, creating large areas of native woodlands, water protection, utilising technology for environmental monitoring, cropping to improve soil health, and undertaking farm-wide carbon assessments.

David believes in getting the basics and the technology right, seeing both as vital for any business. “With so many variables, understanding the basics, and interactions is likely to be key to developing a sustainable farm and countryside for future generations to enjoy.”

Ms Johnston added: “David is a progressive thinker, both in terms of the technology he uses, as well as his attention to continuously improve farmland biodiversity. The judges were fascinated by David’s pioneering approach to trading Biodiversity Net Gain credits generating an income equivalent to his previous support payments, as well as his decision to take delivery of an autonomous AgXeed tractor this coming year. And when it comes to collaboration, we all praised the farm’s shared machinery and labour agreement with their neighbour, something the family implemented many years ago, long before the approach became mainstream.”

Commenting on the award, Gustavo Palerosi Carneiro, Senior Vice President BASF Agricultural Solutions EMEA & Central Asia said, “The Rawcliffe Bridge Award goes beyond recognising exceptional individual farmers like David. It also symbolises the ongoing commitment of farmers and innovators in the UK to strike a balance between sustainability and productivity in agriculture, all while addressing the challenges of climate change, volatile markets, and high societal expectations.”

Commenting on the win, David said, “I am absolutely delighted, overwhelmed and humbled to win this prestigious award. I’ve been involved in a number of public activities but this one means a great deal, especially given the previous winners and BASF’s long term commitment to sustainability.

"The family and farm has always been at the heart of all we do, and whilst my name is on the plate, it is recognition for my wonderful wife Hayley, and whole family.

"The whole process has been quite amazing, from the thought provoking application to the award ceremony today. I’m really looking forward to building connections, and taking up the opportunities ahead, with BASF and all the award partners.

"I’d like to congratulate all the finalists, and thank everyone who has developed this award. I am so proud to be the 2025 winner of The Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability."

The joint runners up for the award were Andrew Brown from Fairchilds in Leicestershire and Emma and Martin Hamer from Meadowsweet Farm in Oxfordshire. All the finalists impressed the judges with their practices and commitment.

With a strong focus on wildlife and the environment, Andrew Brown’s vow to continuous enhancements has included planting 3,500 native trees - with the help of local schools and scout groups – the sowing of bird, pollen and nectar seed mixes, a 3.5km permissive bridleway for the local community, owl nesting boxes, and the implementation of two-year grass free legume mixes, to help eliminate black-grass and enhance wheat crop potential.

Emma and Martin Hamer run a mixed enterprise; half the land is arable and the rest is in grass, allowing them to combine a wide rotation while integrating their beef herd, contributing positively to both soil and crop health. They are passionate about adopting new approaches to improve the business and create a completely circular system. This has included experimenting with bi-cropping - growing peas or beans with oats - as feed for their livestock. They regularly conduct bird surveys, have sown wildflowers into grass, installed bird nesting boxes, and have offered space to a local bee keeper to encourage more pollination.

As the winner of the award, Mr Felce will be fully funded to attend the 2026 Oxford Farming Conference, themed “Growing Resilience”, and will have access to BASF’s Global Sustainability network and industry experts to help advise and support further on-farm activities.

Commenting on the award, Ms Johnston, added, “The Rawcliffe Bridge Award for Sustainability was created to celebrate the value and importance that the agricultural and wider rural sector is placing on sustainability on every level.

“When BASF launched the award in 2022, our hope was that it would become a platform to showcase best practice, inspiring others, and developing a network of support, and as we add another winner to the award’s growing legacy, we feel we have achieved this.”

The previous winners of the award are Coin Chappell (2022), with Guy Prudom as runner-up, Mat and Lloyd Smith (2023), the runner up was Will Oliver.

~ENDS~

About BASF’s Agricultural Solutions division

Everything we do, we do for the love of farming. Farming is fundamental to provide enough healthy and affordable food for a rapidly growing population, while reducing environmental impacts. That’s why we are working with partners and experts to integrate sustainability criteria into all business decisions. With €919 million in 2024, we invest in a strong R&D pipeline, combining innovative thinking with practical action in the field. Our solutions are purpose-designed for different crop systems. Connecting seeds and traits, crop protection products, digital tools and sustainability approaches, to help deliver the best possible outcomes for farmers, growers and our other stakeholders along the value chain. With teams in the lab, field, office and in production, we do everything in our power to build a sustainable future for agriculture. In 2024, our division generated sales of €9.8 billion. For more information, please visit www.agriculture.basf.com or our social media channels.

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