PRESS RELEASE

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**A good helping of insight and inspiration brought to the table at Turriff Show’s Business Breakfast**

The Turriff Show Business Breakfast delivered its biggest helping of insight and inspiration yet on the second day of the biggest two-day agricultural show in Scotland.

Headline sponsor Virgin Money and associate sponsor Ledingham Chalmers helped fuel a lively event that has rapidly gained traction as a must-attend function, drawing local business owners, industry experts, farmers and journalists for an energising start to the final day.

Already hugely successful in only its third year, the Business Breakfast welcomed experienced Chair Jane Craigie, local journalist and communicator, who kept discussions flowing as four dynamic speakers shared their outlooks and perspectives on the industry.

First to take to the stage was Mike Duxbury, co-founder of the Inclusive Farm, who used his time to prove that determination knows no boundaries.

Since losing his sight at age six, Mike has maintained his unwavering belief that ‘anything is possible’ and was the first blind person to attend the Warwickshire College of Agriculture.

Mike discussed his journey from opening the Inclusive Farm in Bedfordshire with his wife Ness, creating groundbreaking opportunities for people with disabilities in agriculture, to now bringing the same concept to Scotland where the couple have recently taken on a 22-acre tenancy near Tarland, courtesy of The MacRobert Trust.

Discussing what he believes to be an under appreciation of those with diverse needs in the workplace, Mike said “Don’t look at the disability, look at the person. Give them an opportunity to show you what they can do.

“We are struggling with accepting diversity in people, yet we’ve embraced making the natural environment and our businesses more diverse. Given the current workforce issues we face as an industry, it would be to everyone’s advantage if we could start actively supporting people with diverse needs.”

Meanwhile, Dr Jenna Ross OBE brought world-class expertise from farm to showground, combining her Aberdeenshire farming roots with a PhD in Environmental Science and a globally ranked MBA.

Jenna explained how her inspiration for a career in environmental science came from growing up on her family farm which sits on Queen’s View near Tarland in Royal Deeside. So called as it was reportedly Queen Victoria’s best-loved vista – and more recently described by King Charles as his favourite spot too.

Now leading international development for the UK Government funded UK Agri-Tech Centre, Jenna brought a global perspective to the morning, sharing fascinating insights into the high-impact projects she’s leading, driving sustainability, productivity and profitability on farms worldwide.

Discussing what she thinks the industry can do to inspire the next generation into a career in agriculture, Jenna said “Young people need to see that agriculture isn’t just traditional farming, it’s innovation, science and solving global challenges. It is so important that we take time to go into education settings at all levels - primary, secondary and tertiary - and talk about agriculture as a STEM subject, which it absolutely is.

“The industry has so much to offer, from farming to research, technology, business and beyond, and we need to showcase these opportunities and widen the net for a more diverse future workforce – not just for the advancement of our industry, but to help solve the complex challenges we face.”

Next up was Christine Tacon CBE who delivered insights from the frontline of food industry leadership.

Drawing on her experiences from roles such as former Groceries Code Adjudicator and Chair of the Red Tractor Assurance scheme to her current position as Member Nominated Director of the Co-op Group, Christine offered a unique perspective on navigating the complex issue of global food security.

“It’s absolutely right that we focus on food security, but we must also turn our attention to resilience and building longer term relationships in our supply chains.

“With issues such as rising global temperatures and water scarcity, the future is likely to see supermarkets place increased value on products being guaranteed from a more resilient source to mitigate any risk from less robust sources and ensure continuity of supply.

“The Co-op is very much moving towards more long-term relationships with farmers and growers, sharing insights and knowledge across the board and taking responsibility for understanding where the issues are.”

The final speaker for the morning was Brian Richardson, Head of Agriculture for Virgin Money. Born and raised in Yorkshire, Brian brought decades of agri-business expertise to the breakfast event.

Being a Nuffield Scholar and having served as Chief Executive at H&H Group for 10 years before joining the bank, Brian touched on his perception of recent negativity in the industry, and how he hoped we could reignite the positive messaging to the public.

“Uncertainty in the industry has slowed investment and led to a 15% reduction in lending compared to pre-covid. The new and unwelcome challenge of IHT changes hasn’t helped, but farmers should take the opportunity now to be proactive in looking at their assets, deciding what succession looks like, and bringing those conversations forward.

“To give real confidence to those working in the industry, we need to see longer-term plans from the government and a reset on support.

“We know farmers are resilient and adaptable, producing great food at incredible value for consumers, so we should focus on what we know, while supporting our goals for carbon reduction, and produce more food in a more sustainable way.”

Chair of the event, Jane Craigie, said the morning’s speakers had left attendees feeling inspired by what was possible. “Once again the Turriff Show Business Breakfast was a big hit. We had over 100 people, a fantastic line up of panellists who shared their diverse and very honest insights into science, diversity, inclusion, and global food security as well as economic outlook, the confidence in the farming sector, and so much in between.

“Huge thanks must also go to Virgin Money and Ledingham Chalmers. Turriff Show is a community event run dominantly by volunteers and relies on the support of sponsors to bring important conversations like these to our north-east farming community.

“It was an absolute privilege to chair the session, and we’re looking forward to the 2026 Turriff Show when we will be expanding the business offering to a new Business Hub.

“Business is a key part of the Turriff Show and the reason that people come, and it seems fitting to create a business specific area of the show where farmers and the wider industry can come to discuss the farming sector, its outlook, its challenges and its opportunities.”

Turriff Show, now in its 161st year, welcomes over 24,000 visitors each year and as well as the Business Breakfast event there are over 300 exhibitor stands, and more than 1,500 livestock classes with £88,000 of prize money, offering plenty to explore in the showground across the two days.

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