



Rural business goes local

There are loads of opportunities for rural businesses to thrive Great North Meet delegates were told yesterday.

A packed audience at Newcastle Racecourse heard from four young farmers who have used local markets in different ways to set up thriving businesses.

Colin McGregor, took over the daily management of the family arable farming business at the age of 21.

Ralph Thompson has established an agricultural contracting business.

Rod Smith has capitalised on the tourists who swarm past his farm gate on Holy Island.

Donald MacPherson, born in the Highlands, now farms by Berwick and is making a increasing impact with his 'Well Hung and Tender' beef brand.

All four are 'sweating their assets' - using their strengths to build different and successful business models.

The conference was also able to put these real-life opportunities into a world and UK context when it heard from eminent speakers about the breadth of change which society has to face over the next few years and how this would impact on rural business.

It was snowing hard outside as Professor Stuart Lane of the University of Durham talked about global warming. So it was appropriate that one of his themes was how the 'tyranny' of short term events made it difficult for people to take a sensible long term view about what the impacts of climate change.

And Tim Evans of Renewable Zukunft showed how there was money to be made from renewable energy generation in the north with minimal impact on food production.

Commenting on the Conference Sir Ben Gill, for the Royal Agricultural Society of England said: "Understanding all the issues covered at this year's Great North Meet will be an essential ingredient for rural businesses to know their own way forward".

The conference was sponsored by George F White, One North East, Armstrong Watson, Dickinson Dees and Lycetts. To obtain copies of the presentations, visit www.greatnorthmeet.co.uk

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Notes for Editors:

1. The Royal Agricultural Society of England plays a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science, the promotion of best practice and a co-ordinated, impartial approach to wide-ranging rural issues (see www.rase.org.uk).
2. The Great North Meet is an annual conference organised by the Royal Agricultural Society of England.
3. Press release issued by Julie Bublaitis, Marketing Assistant. 02476 858217