

Press Release

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Professional development at Dairy Show's heart

The UK's largest dairy show is counting down to another day of top class competition and industry development, with professionalism a key theme of this year's event.

As the industry prepares for Brexit, professional development and business acumen will be vital farming attributes, according to head of shows Alan Lyons. "The industry is facing a period of drastic change, both through political upheaval and exciting technological improvements. It's therefore more important than ever that we work together to help producers take dairying into a profitable future."

This year the Dairy Show – which will be held on 3 October near Shepton Mallet, Somerset - welcomes on board a new chairman, David Cotton. Bringing a wealth of experience and industry knowledge, Mr Cotton is only the fourth show chairman to head up the 33-year old event. Based at Bridge Farm, Glastonbury, fourth generation farmer Mr Cotton milks 250 Holstein Friesians, keeps all his own replacements and rears beef and youngstock.

His involvement with the Royal Bath and West Society stretches back many years, and he has previously been chairman of the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers and the Dairy Event. He also sits on the AHDB Dairy board and is a non-executive director at the RPA.

"There haven't been many Dairy Show chairmen, so it's quite an honour to take on the role," says Mr Cotton. "I hope I can help shape the direction of the Show over the next few years as it is an increasingly specialist market."

Professionalism in the sector is key. "Businesses must be efficient and will need tweaking every year to keep them modern. Training and education are so important, through your own continued professional development and for your staff," he adds. "We need to show that we, as dairy farmers, are professionals. A lot of us stay in the industry our whole lives and if we don't continually train, then our farms go backwards."

The retention and recruitment of staff will be particularly important in a post-Brexit world, warns Mr Cotton. "We've got some excellent seminars on attracting and retaining staff at the show." However, the industry would also benefit from having careers' officers in schools to promote agricultural careers. "We need to get this message across to educators to secure the future of farming."

With over 300 trade stands, the Dairy Show will of course be showcasing new technological

developments, helping producers to map out the future of dairy farming. And it will showcase the very best genetics, with the National Jersey Show alongside many other leading breeds. “This is an opportunity to showcase how important farming is for the UK.”

- The Dairy Show will be held on 3 October at the Royal Bath & West Showground. Schedules for show classes will be available online from August, and advance saver tickets can be purchased from www.bathandwest.com.
- The Dairy Show is registered with Dairy Pro and current members and those who join at the event will get their attendance registered on their personal development record and receive 2 Dairy Pro points.

About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

- Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
- Technical events and Seminars
- Practical farming advice and conferences
- Countryside Education
- Diversification advice for farmers
- Education for children
- A market place for countryside products
- Plus all the events run by the Society and Bath & West Enterprises Ltd.

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