



# FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

**Changing the Mindset In Farming – Panel Evening**  
Buckleuch Arms, St Boswells  
3rd December 2025



# Changing the Mindset in Farming



The recent panel night, '**Changing the Mindset In Farming**', brought together farmers to explore the ever-changing mindset in the future of agriculture.

The panel of farmers shared their personal stories, experiences and tips on how to shift mindset for success in the farming industry. The speakers were chosen based on how they have adopted new approaches to overcome their challenges.

The conversation was vast, and many topics were covered on the night from succession, education, finances to looking forward to the future of agriculture.

The night also aimed to highlight farmers who blend tradition with innovation, showcasing their achievements and encouraging others to adopt similar approaches. These strategies can help farmers adapt to modern challenges and improve their practices, ultimately leading to more sustainable and productive farming.

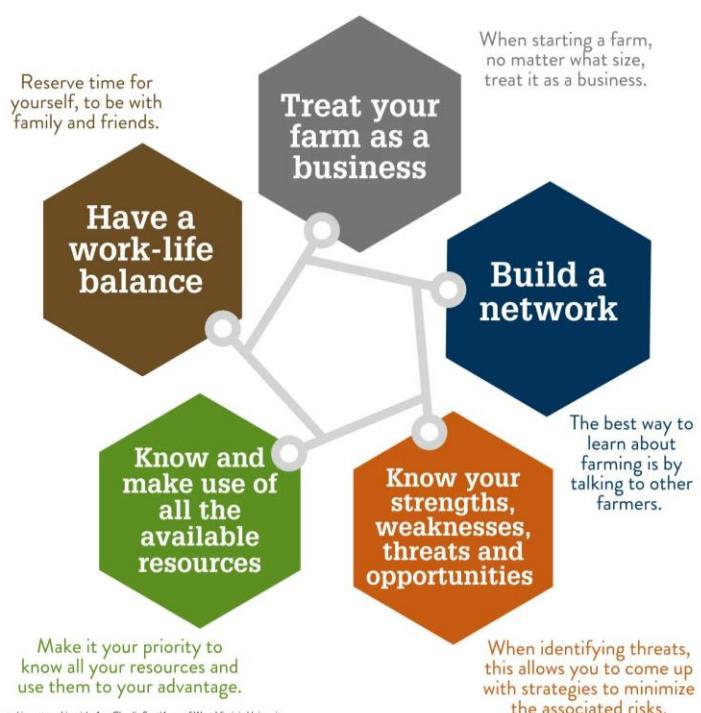
## What is Mindset in Farming?

Changing the mindset in farming means shifting from traditional heavy input methods to an innovative forward thinking system with an adaptive approach.

Also embracing continuous learning is vital through practices such as data use, regenerative practices (soil health, working with nature), and long-term vision (patience, sustainability) to navigate market changes, technology, and environmental challenges.

All these techniques help to:

- Foster resilience.
- Collaboration.
- Be proactive with problem-solving over reactive responses.



## Top 5 Strategies for Farmers.

Taken from Farm Credit Knowledge Centre.

# Speaker insights



## David Cooper – Sheep Farmer

David and his wife Cora are first generation landowners at Tardoes Farm, Muirkirk who have built the business to 5,050 acres by prioritising low inputs and being efficient with their time. Producing sustainable high-quality lamb for the UK market, whilst enhancing habitats for nature. Using holistic management to optimise everything they have. They have no feed costs, no energy costs and minimal medicine. Also, not making any hay, silage or topping grass. This simplicity compliments their land and over the years has improved land sustainably.

The Coopers are championing the positive role that sheep can have in conservation grazing and nature recovery. Using adaptive mob rotational grazing we are using large mobs on mainly region 3 land within a SPA (Special Protection Area's) and SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest). Developing a sustainable, profitable, resilient sheep farming system with very little inputs as first generation landowners. Highlighting what is possible on marginal land to both build a business and habitats for red list species. They have completed over 800 hectares of peatland restoration whilst still grazing, allowing natural rest periods through the adaptive mob grazing. Mitigating climate impacts.

***David told the audience his organic, low-input system has changed his life allowing him to focus on his fencing business and family life.***



## Robert Shanks – Dairy Farmer

Queenscairn near Kelso is an organic dairy farm where Robert and Andrena Shanks runs 250 Holstein cows with a Friesian bull with the aim of converting the herd to Friesian. The farming couple took the decision to convert to organic milk production in 2005 and Queenscairn undertook a two-year conversion process between 2006 and 2008. In 2018 they took the decision to construct new facilities such a new parlour and a state-of-the-art straw-based system for one-third of the milking herd as well as dry cows and in-calf heifers.

Queenscairn was shortlisted in 2021 for Scottish Dairy Farm of the Year title at AgriScot.



***One of Robert's main takeaways was to not fear borrowing money from the bank as this is integral to pushing your business forward.***

# Speaker insights

## Mark & Jane Gray – Broomhouse Farm & Shop

Broom House near Durham is a windy spot at 750 feet, with fabulous views over the surrounding countryside, when the weather allows! Broom House is a livestock farm – so most of our fields grow grass and clover mixes. Some arable crops, such as oats and barley are grown, as well as peas and forage crops like kale – with the aim of creating a healthy rotation to improve the soil so that we can produce as much of our own feed for the animals as possible. We have a herd of beautiful Aberdeen Angus cattle, as well as a large flock of Lleyn sheep and a small herd of Saddleback pigs as well as a flock of laying hens. The aim is to breed all replacement animals on the farm, enabling us to improve the quality of our livestock through breeding.

In 2004 we opened a butchery on the farm, this has grown into a successful Farm Shop with many loyal local customers who have followed our steady progress with interest and pride. We remain committed to our core aim of selling only our very own Aberdeen Angus Beef, Lamb, Mutton and rare breed Saddleback Pork and have gradually added to our original offering by developing a range of complementary Farm Shop products – from organic milk, butter, bread and poultry to a delicious range of mustards, sauces and also a wide range of gifts. In 2006 The Forest Adventure opened. This attraction is aimed at 5–12-year-olds and was designed by our family for other families to enjoy.



***Since opening the farms doors, the Gray's have welcomed over 85,000 school children to the farm.***



**MONITOR  
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