



News release
Date: xx/3/25
For immediate use

Hear from farming entrepreneurs 'on the couch' at Monitor Farm meeting

The North East is a hotspot for young, entrepreneurial farmers, typified by Duncan and Claire Morrison, the Deeside Monitor Farmers. Recognising that fact, the next Deeside Monitor Farm meeting will be a forward-looking evening featuring a panel of farmers who are chasing and creating a positive future.

Open to everyone, whatever their age, 'On the Couch with Michael Blanche', host of The Pasture Pod, will be held on Thursday 20 March from 5.45-8pm at Inverurie Town Hall.

Michael, as well as podcasting, farms 550 ewes and 200 hogs as a tenant at Culteuchar near Forgandenny, Perth, owns a share of a growing suckler herd of 45 Angus cross Welsh black females and contract farms sheep for a neighbour, as well as being a farm consultant.

The Inverurie event will bring together young, positive farmers who are clear that their future is in farming: Striving to do what they do well, seeking out opportunities and continually improving and growing is in their blood. 'On the couch with Michael Blanche' will be:

- Kirsty and Ross Williams – farmers at Ranna Farm, Tarland, where they moved with their family after an Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) starter farm. They have pedigree and commercial cattle and sheep, oven ready poultry, finishing pigs and arable crops, and also have day jobs working with SAC Consulting and Norvite, respectively.
- Michelle Bruce - farms at Meikle Tillyeve, Udney with her husband Gary and their daughter Rosie, where they have six working Collies and 730 breeding ewes. Michelle also works as a part-time self-employed agricultural consultant, and the pair also host sheepdog training clinics.
- Robert Marshall – runs a mixed Aberdeenshire farm near Lumphanan extending to over 2,500 acres of arable and grassland. He took over the majority partnership of his family business in his 20s, with the support of his parents and continues to manage change, building climate resilience into his system.
- Louise Munro - farms with her husband Stuart at Mossend near Hatton, Aberdeenshire where she manages 50 Stabiliser cattle, finishing the progeny and brings in store lambs over winter. She's a mum to two boys, is a farm consultant and the North East of Scotland Farm Management Association secretary.

Michael will interview each of them as part of a light-hearted discussion about the routes each has taken on their steps to farming fame. The meeting will be opened by Alix Ritchie of Farmstrong, who will warm up the audience before Michael and his guests take to the stage,

with all five panellists seated on a very large couch supplied by Transform Community Development.

Peter Beattie, Monitor Farm regional adviser says: “This meeting will bring a panel of younger farmers together with a star of farming podcasts for a light-hearted and positive discussion of all things in agriculture. We’d be delighted to see farmers of all ages there, and especially young farmers – the meeting is open to all.”

- *Monitor Farm open meeting ‘On the couch with Michael Blanche’ Thursday 20 March from 5.45-8pm (doors open at 5.30pm) at Inverurie Town Hall, Market Place, Inverurie AB51 3SN. Tea and coffee will be available, so please book: <https://bit.ly/3CI2jUT>*

Ends

Photo caption: Michael Blanche will host the Monitor Farm meeting at Inverurie Town Hall on Thursday 20 March from 5.45-8pm.

Notes to editors:

About Monitor Farm Scotland:

- The Monitor Farm Scotland programme is managed by Quality Meat Scotland with support from AHDB.
- The programme is fully funded by the Scottish Government Knowledge Transfer Innovation Fund.
- The nine farms chosen to take part in this four-year programme reflect the diverse tapestry of livestock and mixed farming across Scotland.
- The aim of the programme is to help to farms reach full economic, social, and environmental sustainability by optimising production.
- The programme is farmer led and farmer driven with support from specialists and experts to assess farm performance, explore opportunities, and develop solutions to the challenges faced.
- Each Monitor Farm will be steered by a management group of 10 to 12 farming businesses with support from the local community group.
- The learnings and the example set by Monitor farms aims to benefit farmers across the whole of Scotland.
- The programme is managed by an in-house delivery team, who are funded through the programme and managed by QMS.
- For more information visit: <https://www.monitorfarms.co.uk/>

About QMS:

Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) is the public body which helps Scotland’s £2.8 billion red meat sector maximise its positive role in our wealth, health and environment. This includes supporting productivity and profitability, sustainability and integrity, as well as around 50,000 jobs across the red meat supply chain including in some of our most rural areas.

90% of Scotland's cattle, sheep and pig livestock farmed for red meat are part of our internationally recognised and approved [assurance schemes](#), under the Scotch Beef UK geographical indicator (UKGI), Scotch Lamb UKGI and Specially Selected Pork brands. They give people at home and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to the highest of standards.

The suite of assurance schemes extends across the supply chain including feed, haulage, auction-markets and processing. Together the six livestock and non-livestock schemes make sure Scotland's red meat is among the world's best for quality, animal welfare standards, production and traceability.

We are evidence-informed and work closely with partners across the supply chain to [track developments](#) in the beef, lamb and pork markets, sharing latest market prices, market developments and commentary with industry.

QMS also:

- runs major marketing and advertising campaigns to promote the brands and drive demand
- supports product development and innovation for profitable supply chains
- works on projects which support environmentally friendly practice for a sustainable sector that plays a key part in protecting our planet
- educates young and aspiring people across classrooms, sports clubs and communities in Scotland on the health benefits of red meat and career opportunities in the sector
- Please note that the use of the word 'Scotch' in the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands is correct and should not be substituted for an alternative such as Scots or Scottish. The history of the use of the word Scotch in this way traces back to the 18th century.

Useful info

- [QMS 5-year Strategy to 2028](#)
- [Red Meat Industry Profile 2024](#) – for key statistics across the red meat supply chain
- [QMS website](#)
- [QMS social media - Facebook / Twitter / LinkedIn](#)
- [QMS Podcast](#)