

MEDIA RELEASE



Judges announced for 180th Royal Highland Show

Wednesday, 18 December 2019, Edinburgh – The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) has announced the judges for next year's Royal Highland Show, taking place on the 18-21 June 2020.

The judges who will be tasked with placing the country's top sheep, horses, cattle and goats come from far and wide, from local names to some who will travel from as far afield as Australia to judge Scotland's finest livestock.

Following the inaugural year of the Dalchirla Trophy for Overall Young Handler, the honour has fallen to renowned Limousin breeders and regular Show-goers Sarah Jane Jessop and Dougie McBeath to place the champion. The choice of judges rotates around the different sections each year and was chosen by the Chief Stewards of the Beef Cattle Section for 2020.

The 2020 Royal Highland Show sees the reintroduction of the Lincoln Red classes to the Beef Section and marks the 125th anniversary of the breed. Scott Donaldson of Carlisle will be the man in the middle having spent his career as a respected livestock auctioneer and more recently taking on the role of Joint Managing Director at Harrison and Hetherington.

Esmor Evans, owner of the famous Maerdy herd from Flintshire in Wales, will have the privileged task of placing the Overall Beef Interbreed and Teams, while Donald Biggar of Castle Douglas will be judging the Beef Shorthorn, having been awarded an OBE in 2003 for services to the livestock industry.

Another successful Show competitor judging for 2020 is Alistair Cormack of Chirnside, Berwickshire. Alistair will be placing the Aberdeen Angus following the success of his 13-month-old heifer Carlhurlie Darcie standing champion out of an impressive 143 cattle at the 2017 Aberdeen Angus World Forum.

Judging the Beef Young Handler for 2020 will be Tracey Nicol of Perth who runs the herd of prize winning Charolais at Balthayock owned by Major Walter. The Balthayock team tasted success in 2019 with heifer Balthayock Nessie who went on to be Overall Beef Champion.

The Dairy Section will see the return of the Queens Cup this year, being awarded by Jimmy Hodge of Eyemouth, Berwickshire for the Overall Dairy prize. Jimmy ran the 550-strong Lemington Holstein herd, which was synonymous with showing until its dispersal in 2007.

Cumbria is well represented amongst the judges for Dairy this year, with Glyn Lucas, another auctioneer from Harrison and Hetherington, taking charge of The Any Other Breed class after a strong inaugural year in 2019. He is joined by John Garnett, Anna Stable and Dan Stamper judging Holsteins, Jerseys and Dairy Shorthorns respectively.

The prize for Dairy Calf and Showmanship will for 2020 be awarded by Michael Yates of Castle Douglas, part of the well-known Yates family who run Eastford and Logan Holsteins and enjoyed their own successes at the Show, winning the Holstein section in 2006 and 2013. The Ayrshires will be placed by Ian McLean, from Bushmills, Co Antrim in Northern Ireland, whose 400 strong mixed herd is situated only three miles from the Giants Causeway.

The Sheep Section is in great hands this year, as former RHASS Chairman and Chief Steward of Sheep, Clark Stewart will be placing the Overall Interbreed. Clark, of Cupar, Fife, is a prominent Pedigree Border Leicester, Suffolk and Texel breeder. The Texel class was the biggest section of 2019, and for 2020 will be judged by Robert Wilson of Turiff, Aberdeenshire, who also had the honour of judging the Overall Sheep Interbreed at the 2019 Royal Welsh Show.

William Dunlop, the renowned blackface breeder running 1600 breeding ewes at Elmscleugh in East Lothian, will be casting his expert eye over the Sheep Pairs and Young Handler. Another former RHASS Chairman, John Dykes of West Linton, Peeblesshire, will be judging the Bluefaced Leicester Traditional Types.

The Horse Sections will be judged by some of the most experienced equestrians in the business for 2020. In the Heavy Horse Section, we have two judges travelling all the way from Australia. Colin Brown, who runs McMurchie Clydesdale Stud in New South Wales alongside his wife Karen, will be judging Clydesdale Males, while Max Marriott, of Aarunga Stud in Victoria will be placing the Clydesdale Females. Max has been involved with the breed for over 50 years, and also judged the Heavy Horse Turnouts at the Show in 2015.

Beth Sibbald of Dollar, Clackmannanshire, will be taking the reins for the Sanderson Trophy. Beth is a familiar face on the circuit and a well-respected judge, successfully breeding her own Highland Ponies under the 'Thorn' prefix as well as helping husband Robert out with his Clydesdales.

In the Light Horse Section, the prestigious St Johns Wells Trophy will be awarded this year by Sylvia Ormiston of Ballater, Aberdeenshire. Sylvia enjoys the very esteemed responsibility of running the Balmoral Highland Pony stud for Her Majesty the Queen and will also be judging Working Native Pony in Harness for 2020. Judging the HOYS Supreme In Hand Championship will be Nigel Hollings of Blackburn, Lancashire, who has enjoyed success breeding, riding and producing many Champions in the showring, including a grand total of 26 HOYS winners and 35 Royal International Horse Show (RIHS) winners.

Father and daughter duo Thomas and Diane Brash of Linlithgow, West Lothian, will be judging the Cobs (Confirmation) and Cobs (Ride) respectively, with Thomas also judging Sport Horse In Hand.

The 35 horse sections will be judged by some of the most experienced equestrians in the industry, with 38 Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) Championship Qualifying classes up for grabs.

RHASS Chairman Bill Gray said: "I am very much looking forward to my first Royal Highland Show as Chairman, and our 2020 line-up of esteemed judges only adds to the excitement. We are proud to present Scotland's premier showcase of our finest animals every year, and the 180th Royal Highland Show will be a truly special celebration of our country's food, farming and rural life."

Supported by Royal Bank of Scotland, the 180th Royal Highland Show will take place at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh, on 18-21 June 2020.

For further information please visit www.royalhighlandshow.org.