New Release

DATE

*For immediate use*

**East Lothian Monitor Farm meeting to explore farm-based carbon capture and storage**

Carbon from every angle, is the theme for East Lothian’s Monitor Farm event at Castleton Farm Orchard, being held on Tuesday 11 June. Farmers and crofters are invited to learn more about farming carbon and what it means to them.

Castleton Farm spans 418 acres (169ha) and is run by Stuart McNicol and his father, Bill. The arable acreage produces wheat, malting spring barley, spring beans, and cover crops grazed by sheep.

The theme for this interactive meeting considers the carbon agenda from a scientific, farming, measuring and policy point of view. Research Leader at the Hutton Institute, Dr Kenneth Loades, will be on hand to discuss what carbon means for arable farmers, and the policies involved. Joe Ritchie will be offering carbon removal advice from UNDO, looking at enhanced rock weathering for permanent carbon removal, and Agreena, Europe’s largest soil carbon programme helping farmers to profitably transition to regenerative practices, will be explaining ways to achieve carbon reductions. Farmstrong Scotland will also be joining the afternoon, offering advice surrounding the importance of well-being for those working the land.

Host farmer Stuart says:

“As I research ideas and adapt them for our business; it seems only right to open the gates here and let others find out what we’re doing and why. We are trying to improve this farm by implementing a strip-till system, ploughing only when necessary and we use variable rate applications when drilling, fertilising, and lime spreading. It will be interesting to hear the speakers provide detail about their specific subjects and how these relate to our farm, particularly the complex topics of soil and carbon, which have been a focus for us.”

Speaker, Dr Kenneth Loades will explain soil stabilisation, physics, and plant root mechanics, identifying ways to protect and manage soils to support a healthy system for multiple benefits. Dr Loades says:

“Understanding the services required of soil in the future, and soil’s ability to deliver these services, will be vital in managing soils to be resilient under changing environmental conditions.”

UNDO has worked with nearly 200 farms and believes that removing carbon dioxide and permanently locking it away through enhanced weathering technology has a huge part to play in keeping the planet fit for future generations. Joe Ritchie explains:

"As a carbon project developer that enriches soils through mineral-rich rock, we want to show how inorganic material can make a drastic difference on pastures, passing on health benefits to livestock and ultimately Scottish consumers."

Kitty Grubb of Agreena will be explaining how regenerative farming practices can capture carbon and keep it in the ground to promote healthier soils and more resilient farms. Kitty says:

"I am really looking forward to discussing how farmers can make the most of their soil: generating carbon credits by transitioning to lower disturbance practices, while also increasing soil health and biodiversity. There is so much going on in the world of carbon that this will be a great opportunity to answer questions, dispel any myths and hopefully encourage a new income stream for arable farmers across the country."

Farmstrong Scotland’s Community Engagement Specialist Clare Dickson explains the rural wellbeing programme’s role at the event:

“We are delighted to be joining the Monitor Farm meeting to chat all things wellbeing including the five key steps – connect, take notice, be active, keep learning and give. During an interactive session, you will have the chance to reflect on your own wellbeing, whilst connecting with others to find out what they do to invest in their wellbeing, so when you are feeling a little low, you can draw on your reserves. It can be as simple as making time for a walk or having a coffee with a friend. We look forward to seeing you on 11 June.”

The meeting will be concluded with a BBQ provided by the farm’s agritourism venture, the Drift café.

Date: **Tuesday 11 June 2024, 3pm for 3.30pm start**

Venue: **Castleton Farm, North Berwick EH39 5PN**

ENDS

Words count 670

**Notes to editors:**

QMS is the public body responsible for promoting the Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb brands in the UK and PGI labelled Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb branded products abroad, and for promoting Scottish pork products under the Specially Selected Pork logo.

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.

QMS also helps the Scottish red meat sector improve its sustainability, efficiency and profitability and maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy.

The quality assurance schemes run by QMS cover more than 90% of livestock farmed for red meat in Scotland. They offer consumers in the UK and overseas the legal guarantee that the meat they buy has come from animals that have spent their whole lives being raised to some of the world’s strictest welfare standards.

Scotland’s beef, lamb and pork producers make an important contribution to the country’s economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing over £2 billion to the annual GDP of Scotland and supporting around 50,000 jobs (many in fragile rural areas) in the farming, agricultural supply and processing sectors.

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