



Diversification, innovation and exciting the customer

Meat South West and NFU South West are organising a one-day free conference focussing on **enterprise** and **innovation** in the marketplace as well as better connection and communication with the customer.

Featured topics and discussion issues include the South West response to the global marketplace, the challenges of the changing marketplace for hill farmers, the **positive promotion of British agriculture** and how best to educate the consumer, the opportunities for collaboration, diversification, product development and most important of all, making a profit by **exciting the customer**.

The free one day event, '**Working Towards a Brighter Future**', is supported by the **South West Regional Development Agency** and will now take place on **Tuesday February 26th 2008, 10 am – 4.10 pm, at Sandy Park Conference Centre, Exeter (Exeter Chief's Rugby Club)**. The aim is to encourage the supply chain to work together more closely to improve the prospects of the region's livestock producers and growers. Around 300 delegates are expected to attend.

Despite the conference being held in Exeter, farmers from all over the UK are welcome to attend and will gather plenty of useful tips about how to successfully diversify their offerings and farming activities in order to 'excite the customer'.

Organiser **Helen Ashcroft, Manager** said, '*Producers, processors and abattoirs have had a very difficult time due to circumstances completely beyond their control. The aim is to share a wide range of experiences from progressive producers across the UK, highlighting new ways to add value to farm businesses.*'

More/see over

An impressive line up of speakers and industry experts will be taking part including:

- **Meurig Raymond**, NFU Deputy President and livestock, dairy and arable producer, farms 2800 acres in Pembrokeshire with his twin brother and has gained considerable knowledge of the UK red meat industry in the global marketplace
- **Andrew Wear**, a pioneering hill producer, farming at Fernhill Farm in the Mendip Hills in Somerset, where The Big Green Gathering, Europe's biggest green event, takes place, will share how he is meeting the challenges.
- **Ian Pigott**, NFU Farming Champion of the Year of the 2006 Farmers Weekly Awards, whose brainchild Farm Sunday has tempted thousands of people to visit hundreds of farms through UK to learn about farming methods and the countryside, will talk about the best methods to educate the public.
- **Guy Smith**, award winning Essex farmer and author of Farm, Food & Countryside, deservedly recognised by the RASE for his positive, high profile communications work for the British farming industry, will speak about the positive promotion of UK agriculture and how to get positive messages across.
- **Matthew Naylor**, NFU Young Farmer of the Year in 2000 and a winner of the 2003 Grower of the Year Awards, is an innovative potato, daffodil, delphinium and vegetable grower in Spalding and will be speaking about his enterprising approach to diversification and new product development.
- **Thomas Binns**, NFU Livestock Chairman, farming 1,600 acres in Lancashire, with 2,500 breeding ewes and 100 suckler cows, is a founder director of Connect Plus, a dairy group with a pioneering supply chain partnership and believes collaboration is the key to profitable farming.
- **Stephen Mitchell**, winner of the NFU Scotland Young Achiever Award 2006, has developed the Puddledub beef brand and direct selling business from his Fife based herd of water buffalo and Aberdeen Angus cattle and believes that producers should aim to make profit by exciting customers!
- Finally, the conference will be ably chaired by **Professor John Alliston**, Dean of the School of Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

The Meat South West conference, '**Working Towards a Brighter Future**', takes place on Tuesday 26th February 2008 10 am – 4.10 pm at Sandy Park Conference Centre, Exeter. Places are free but on a first come first served basis. For more details and to register a place, visit www.meatsouthwest.co.uk or email info@meatsouthwest.co.uk or telephone 01837 880443.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Meat South West

- The direct value of the red meat industry to the South West economy is valued at over £1.25 billion per annum employing in excess of 24,500 jobs
- The 46 abattoirs and additional 205 meat processing plants in the region contribute over £280 million and around 7,500 jobs
- Meat South West is a trade organisation for the South West red meat industry. Its membership covers abattoirs, processors, producers and associated companies and organisations across Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Bristol and Bath
- Meat South West is part of South West Food & Drink and funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX), Bpex (British Pig Executive) and industry membership
- Contact Helen Ashcroft Manager 01837 880443 or visit www.meatsouthwest.co.uk for further information

For further press information:

Contact Alexis Thornely or Jilly Greed One Voice Media & PR 01392 278801 email pr@onevoicemedia.co.uk

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