

# Lantra's rallying cry for the importance of agriculture

Speaking the week of the Balmoral Show (12 May) at a gathering of key figures from Government, education and industry, Lantra's UK Chair Dr Gordon McGlone highlighted some of the Sector Skills Council's key achievements and also the importance of agriculture in Northern Ireland. Addressing guests at a dinner in Belfast, Dr McGlone commented on Lantra's successful collaborative work with industry, a supported research programme for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and securing funding from the Department for Employment and Learning to carry out research. This research included benchmarking within the environmental conservation sector, gaining information on Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland and undertaking an analysis of the skills issues affecting the fencing industry in Northern Ireland.

Lantra's Chair outlined the organisation's effective work with industry in the local economy, bringing key individuals together to help meet the skills and business development needs of the environmental and land-based industries.

Dr McGlone also commented on the importance of agriculture to the Northern Ireland economy and expressed his disappointment that recent reports by the Sector Skills Councils' regulatory body, the UKCES, described agriculture as a 'low priority' in terms of economic significance.\* He added that continual agricultural and food production is vital if we are to provide safe and affordable food for a rising population. He highlighted the vast contribution it makes in terms of employment, exports and GVA to the UK economy.

Dr McGlone steps down from his post as Lantra's Chair after 8 successful years, and Campbell Tweed, Lantra's National Chair in Northern Ireland paid tribute at the dinner. Gordon has always been the face of Lantra across the UK and a good friend to Northern Ireland throughout that period. He has made a valuable contribution to the work undertaken across the environmental and land-based sector and it is appropriate that I thank him publicly at this time and wish him every future success.

Campbell Tweed continued: The evening was the perfect opportunity for those attending to discuss the key issues the industry is facing today.

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CREDIT FOR PHOTO:

L124, L134, L135 Dinner guests

L128 Campbell Tweed OBE addresses guests during dinner

L130 Dr Gordon McGlone OBE addressing guest

L141 Campbell Tweed and Paula Smyth making a presentation to Gordon McGlone (centre)

EDITORS NOTES:

" \*UKCES Skills for jobs: today and tomorrow

[http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/NSSA\\_Volume%201\\_FINAL\\_BOOKMARKED\\_110310.pdf](http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/NSSA_Volume%201_FINAL_BOOKMARKED_110310.pdf)

" Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries represents the interests of approximately 20,000 businesses in Northern Ireland which employ around 63,000 employees (approximately 9% of the workforce) .

" Lantra is an employer-led organisation which is licensed by the UK government to drive forward the skills, training and business development agenda for the 17 industries in the sector. The industries represented are: agricultural crops; agricultural livestock; animal care; animal technology; aquaculture; environmental conservation; equine; farriery; fencing; fisheries management; floristry; game and wildlife management; horticulture, landscape and sports turf; land-based engineering; production horticulture; trees and timber; and veterinary nursing.