

PR1424 – 18 August 2010

Finished school and unsure of what s next

The revision is over, the exams have been sat and the results are impending. For thousands of students the next few weeks will be highly stressful, with results determining whether they will continue in education, head off to work or even combine both.

For students who have achieved their anticipated results the next number of weeks will be spent preparing for the next stage in their life. For some this will be university, for others it may be continuing education, seeking employment or training.

Lantra Sector Skills Council works to highlight the variety of environmental and land-based careers by emphasising the benefits of apprenticeships and vocational qualifications, which meet employers needs and demands.

In the past rural careers were deemed as uncool with students as they are often perceived as low-tech with little progression and often poorly paid. This attitude has a dangerous impact as the sector needs to attract thousands of workers to fill the skills gaps that are being created as people leave through demographics. If this trend goes unchanged, it could have a massive effect on both rural and land-based industries, and Scotland s economy.

Lantra s Director for Scotland, Willie Fergusson said: There are many different career choices available with the environmental and land-based industries. In Scotland this sector employs over 108,500 people, but we estimate that the sector will need at least 1,000 new workers each year to meet demand. This means there are plenty of career opportunities for the new generation of employees.

He continued: Land-based and environmental careers may be considered to be old fashioned by the ill-informed, but these careers have made huge technical and scientific advances in recent years and will help provide a sustainable future for Scotland, and as such offer highly technical roles with excellent progression opportunities.

Employers in the sector report that they still find it difficult to recruit people with the right skills and qualifications. John Gillan, Lantra Chair for Scotland and an employer in the land-based and environmental sector said: The sector offers careers for all, either through apprenticeships or via other educational avenues, with the unique opportunity to have a career with prospects through which you can gain skills that you can take through your working life. You can also contribute to the environment in real terms.

Vice President of the National Farmers Union Scotland, Allan Bowie said: From the industry and employer perspective it is even more critical now to try and attract the future workforce for Scottish agriculture which has to be skilled, motivated and suitably rewarded. Going forward, I believe young people that are properly skilled and motivated will have huge opportunities in farming, as an industry we need to encourage and endorse this training.

To find out more about available careers visit our dedicated website www.afuturein.com. To search for your closest courses, please visit www.lantraonestopshop.co.uk, further information on apprenticeships can be found on www.apprenticeshipsinscotland.com.

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EDITOR S NOTES:

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.