

PR1444 – 11 October 2010

## Lantra celebrates Scottish achievements

Lantra Sector Skills Council hosted a reception in the Scottish Parliamentary building to mark its significant achievements within Scotland over the past year.

The event commenced with opening remarks from sponsoring MSP, John Scott, followed by an address from Willie Fergusson, Lantra's National Director for Scotland.

John Scott MSP said: The development of skills and apprenticeships has never been more important than it is today, with food production and environmental improvements more vital than ever before. That is why I applaud and support Lantra in the good work they do in training and up-skilling the next generation of young people, who will keep Scotland in the forefront of business development for years to come.

Highly motivated and dedicated people like Graeme Brown will provide the enthusiasm and have the skills base required to secure a sustainable future in the next decade and beyond.

National Director for Scotland, Willie Fergusson said: As well as highlighting the significant achievements that have taken place within Scotland over the past year, this event provided the opportunity to highlight some of the issues surrounding Modern Apprenticeships that are having an impact on industry; issues such as the cost of training which is high compared with the cost of other Modern Apprenticeships; the need for flexibility around the delivery of training – could this be completed while working for several employers; and the need for funding for the over 20s. We have one of the highest percentages of self-employed people in our sector, yet they are excluded from Modern Apprenticeships because they are not employed; there have been a few models to allow for this on an ad-hoc basis but a solution is needed as the number of self-employed people is likely to increase entrepreneurship.

Willie continued: Priority sectors are regarded as vital to the Scottish economy, and while I am delighted that agriculture and aquaculture are both included within the food and drink cluster, I believe that roles such as ghillies, stalkers, greenkeepers and those working in the equine sector, who make a significant contribution to the tourist sector, do not receive priority funding, therefore I feel there is a need to consider these clusters holistically.

John Gillan, Chair of Lantra's Scotland Council and proprietor of Premier One spoke of the benefits of Modern Apprenticeships to both employers and apprentices. John said: For a young person, a Modern Apprenticeship means a skills set for life, a recognised qualification, makes them more

employable both now and in the future and gives them a sense of personal achievement. Employers benefit from helping build and sustain a skilled workforce which can mean better employee retention, increased productivity and increased profitability. As an employer I take pride in all my apprentices, watching them grow and develop, in part through the training they receive at college, in the workplace and from other providers as they develop into mature, confident adults, making a positive contribution to the company.

Graeme Brown shared his experience as a Modern Apprenticeship; he said: From an early age I was interested in the mechanics of cars and motorbikes and this interest progressed to larger machines and agricultural plant. When I started working full-time with Algo in 2005, in conjunction with the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, my working life really began. The job was, and still is, perfect for me. I worked in the workshop and out on-site, learning my trade in tandem with block release at college. The fundamental skills I was taught at college allowed me to progress and develop within my job. I am able to put my learning to good use.

Attended by employers, industry representatives, key stakeholders, training providers and a range of government the reception proved to be a valuable and successful event.

ENDS

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CREDIT FOR PHOTO

Picture 007 Graeme Brown speaking at the event

Picture 008 Graeme Brown, John Scott MSP, John Gillan and Willie Fergusson, Lantra

Picture 022 Willie Fergusson addressing the audience at Lantra s parliamentary reception

EDITORS 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.