

PR1497 - 7 March 2011

### Crieff Gamekeeper wins award

**Joshua Bunton was named as 'Game and Wildlife Learner of the Year' at the eighth annual Lantra Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year awards ceremony, and was among the winners who met the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead.**

Nominated by the North Highland College, 18 year old Joshua from Dowald in Crieff is studying for a Higher National Certificate in Gamekeeping which he progressed on to after successfully completing a National Certificate last year. Alongside this, Joshua has gained significant practical experience during work placement at Abercairny Estate.

Joshua said: "My training has been very beneficial to me and has made me more direct in my actions. The practical work I did at Abercairny Estate has also been a really effective part of my learning."

David Shaw from the North Highland College said: "Joshua is an active learner and he consistently works to a high standard. He was presented the National Certificate Gamekeeping Student of the Year award in October 2010 in recognition of his hard work. North Highland College have high hopes for Joshua and we are confident he will continue to perform to a high standard and be valuable addition to the gamekeeping profession."

A total of 25 prizes were presented during the Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year awards ceremony organised by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for land-based and environmental industries. The awards, which attracted over 60 nominations, are designed to inspire new entrants to take up a career in the land-based and aquaculture sector and make employers aware of the benefits of a well trained workforce.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead said: "This is the third year I have been honoured to attend the Lantra Awards and, like both previous occasions, I have been impressed by the enthusiasm and skill of the trainees."

"Farming and rural industries face challenging, but interesting times. Scotland's economy is recovering, our food and drink sector is world renowned and we are on the cusp of an energy revolution which is opening up new and exciting opportunities."

"Rural Scotland is very well placed to take advantage of many of these new opportunities and I am sure that many in the hall tonight have the talent to make a significant contribution."

Willie Fergusson, National Director said: "The Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year awards attract a very high calibre of candidates who are committed to further developing their skills and knowledge. It is vital for the future of these industries that we continue to encourage new entrants and demonstrate how employers can see the bottom line benefits that highly skilled new entrants can bring to the business."

Willie continued: "Recognition of the importance of the awards by industry, their commitment to them, and their generosity in sponsoring this event has grown significantly over the years and we are indebted to the sponsors who make this event the success that it is."

Some 140 guests attended this prestigious event at the Crieff Hydro hotel including learners, employers, farmers, crofters, land managers, training providers, stakeholders and members of the Scottish Parliament attended. Skills Development Scotland, Marine Harvest and Scottish Natural Heritage were the main sponsors of the event.

#### ENDS

##### Full list of winners:

- Overall Winner Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year: Scott Simpson
- Overall Runner-Up Land-based and Aquaculture Learner of the Year: Rebecca McWilliams
- Agriculture Learner of the Year: Scott Simpson
- Agriculture Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Craig Connell
- Aquaculture Learner of the Year: Harris Wright
- Aquaculture Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Robert Wyvill
- Equine Learner of the Year: Rebecca McWilliams
- Equine Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Susan Torrance
- Floristry Learner of the Year: Debbie McKenna
- Game and Wildlife Learner of the Year: Joshua Bunton
- Horticulture Learner of the Year: Daryl Russell
- Horticulture Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Ryan Mooney
- Higher Education Learner of the Year: Zane Pretorius
- Higher Education Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Graeme Dunlop
- Land-based Curriculum for Schools Learner of the Year: Danny Watson
- Land-based Curriculum for Schools Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Ryan Munro
- Modern Apprentice of the Year: Stuart Burns
- Trees and Timber Learner of the Year: Eamonn Staunton
- Trees and Timber Learner of the Year Runner-Up: Carina Convery

##### Special Awards:

- Algo Blairgowrie Ltd - Endeavour Award: Righa Purvis
- Algo Blairgowrie Ltd - Endeavour Award: Eve Schulte
- Taypack Potatoes Ltd - Endeavour Award: Debbie McKenna
- CARAS Scotland Award: Zane Pretorius

- CARAS Scotland Award: Fraser Mitchell
- CARAS Scotland Award: Righa Purvis

ISSUED BY:

Paula Smyth - Marketing, Communications and Project Co-ordinator  
Tel: 028 7963 1304 or email [Scotland.media@lantra.co.uk](mailto:Scotland.media@lantra.co.uk)

CREDIT FOR PHOTO:

189 - Joshua Burtonm was presented his award by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary and Rosemary Brown on behalf of George Linton Memorial Trust

EDITORS NOTES:

- Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for land-based and environmental industries, working to ensure these businesses access the training, qualifications, skills and knowledge they need.
- Lantra in Scotland represents the interests of approximately 24,500 businesses (13% of all businesses), which employ 115,700 individuals (representing 2% of all employment across the workforce) and 40,000 volunteers.
- Lantra represents 17 industries: agricultural livestock and crops; animal care; animal technology; aquaculture; environmental conservation; equine; farriery; fencing; fisheries management; floristry; game and wildlife management; land-based engineering; horticulture, landscaping and sports turf; production horticulture; trees and timber and veterinary activities.
- By working together with the sector, Lantra leads research on skills issues and business needs, sets national standards and develops qualifications to meet modern business needs and help businesses grow through skills.
- For more information see [www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk).