

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGES

A BEEF AND SHEEP INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY AT AIRTH CASTLE, NEAR FALKIRK



## Morning Speakers



**Laurent Vernet** is Head of Marketing at QMS. He comes from the Charente region of France and studied Law and Economics at University. He came to Scotland 20 years ago and started working in an abattoir, quickly becoming Export Manager for ABP (Scotland). Laurent then became Business Development Manager for the Livestock and Meat Commission of Northern Ireland, before returning to Scotland to the newly-formed QMS where he was appointed Business Development Manager and then Head of Marketing in 2005.



**Stuart Ashworth** is Head of Economics Services at QMS. Brought up on a Yorkshire Dales livestock farm and educated at Newcastle and Glasgow universities, he joined QMS in 2003. His work centres on analysis of the market, political and business environment facing livestock farmers in Scotland. He also represents the UK on the European Commission's sheep and goat meat civil dialogue group he has contributed to a number of studies looking at the role of support for the sheep sector commissioned by the European Commission.



**Douglas Bell** is Head of Industry Development at QMS, leading a team focused on projects to help improve the red meat industry's profitability. An Edinburgh University graduate, Doug has 30 years' experience of delivering high level management advice and training through to project design and facilitation. Before joining QMS in November 2015, Doug was Head of the Agricultural Policy Unit of SAC Consulting, part of SRUC, Scotland's Rural College. Doug also farms near Carnwath in Lanarkshire.



**John Ritchie** farms 75 suckler beef cattle and 650 breeding sheep at Montalt near Dunning in Perthshire. The farm owns 350 acres and rents a further 300 acres from Lord Rollo, Pitcairns Estate next door. He is the third generation of Ritchie family to farm at Montalt and farms in partnership with his father George and mother Karen. His wife Alix helps out on the farm and works part time for RHET. They have two daughters, Millie 5 and Ellie 3.

## Afternoon Speakers



**Steve Townsend** has worked in agriculture for 39 years and now owns and runs Soil First Farming, a company dedicated to making farmers more profit by improving their soil's structure and fertility. For the last 17 years Steve has been working with farmers advising them on minimum tillage and no-till systems in the UK, Ireland & Europe. Steve has recently gone into partnership with a Gloucestershire farmer looking to use conservation agriculture techniques on shared farms



**Charlie Morgan** began his career at IGER/IBERS for 22 years where he helped develop new grass varieties and grazing methods to benefit UK agriculture. He spent ten years as lead officer for sheep, beef and environmental management systems at the IGER Grassland Development Centre. Since 2009 he has been working across the UK as an independent grassland consultant. In 2014 he was awarded Associate member of Royal Agricultural Societies (ARAgS) for his distinguished service for Grassland & Technology Exchange.



**Donald Brown** is a lecturer with SRUC at Barony Campus, Dumfries. He was brought up on a farm in South Ayrshire and after graduating from West of Scotland Agricultural College worked on farms for 7 years before joining BOCM Silcock for 12 years as a Cattle Feed Specialist. He then spent 15 years as a Feed Systems Specialist with Keenan working mainly as a Beef Specialist in Scotland, North England and Australia with additional responsibilities in Zimbabwe, Botswana, New Zealand and Indonesia. He joined SRUC in 2009 as Course Tutor for HNC Agriculture and lecturer in Livestock Production.



**Dewi Jones** was raised on a family farm on the Llyn Peninsula in North Wales. He studied at the Welsh Agricultural College and then in New Zealand, before returning back to Aberystwyth to lead sheep research projects at the Institute of Rural Sciences (IRS). Following ten years in applied research at IRS, Dewi established CBS Technologies as a spinout from Aberystwyth University. CBS was merged with two other companies in 2004 to create Innovis. Dewi is a Nuffield Scholar, Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society and the 2014 winner of the Sir Bryner Jones Memorial Award for innovation in farming.



**Jim McLaren** is a mixed arable and beef farmer, with a herd of pedigree Simmentals. His arable unit extends to 1000 acres over four units in Perthshire. The land tenure comprises a mix of a full tenancy, a limited partnership, a Short Limited Duration Tenancy (SLDT) and owner-occupied land. Jim is currently Chairman of QMS. He is also a Director of NFU Mutual and a founder Director of Angus Cereals and was President of NFUS from 2007 to 2011. Jim is married with two sons, two daughters and two step-daughters.