



Meet the Speakers

Wednesday 5th November 2025

Hexham Auction Mart

Lord Curry of Kirkharle



Lord Curry is a Northumbrian farmer and businessman and a crossbench (independent) member of the House of Lords.

In 2001–2 he chaired the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, known as the Curry Commission, which produced a report for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Lord Curry is a prolific advocate for farming and the rural economy, in the North, as well as nationally serving on various related House of Lords committees with titles covering Rural Economy; Land Use in England; and Horticultural Sector.

Curry was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1997 New Year Honours, and was knighted in the 2001 Birthday Honours. Lord Curry was formerly chair of NFU Mutual (2003–2011) and non-executive chair of the Better Regulation Executive. Lord Curry is also a member of the all-party parliamentary group Christians in Parliament.

Alistair Carmichael



MP and EFRA Select Committee Chair, elected to Parliament in 2001 as MP for Orkney and Shetland.

Alistair was born and raised on Islay. He first worked in the hotel industry before attending University of Aberdeen where he graduated with a degree in Law in 1992. After graduating, Alistair worked as a Procurator Fiscal Depute then moved into private practice as a solicitor.

He married his wife Kate in 1987 and they live in Orkney with their two sons, Sandy and Simon.

Since becoming an MP in 2001, Alistair has campaigned on a range of issues important to people in the Northern Isles, such as farming, fishing, offshore oil and gas, and more recently the development of renewables. He is also well-known for his work on human rights and has been an active campaigner for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

Jeremy Moody



Secretary, The Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV)

Jeremy has been Secretary and Adviser to the CAAV since 1995. He was closely involved with the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995, several rounds of CAP reform and now the new policies developing across the United Kingdom. He handles the many issues covered by the CAAV including agricultural tenancy and land occupation issues, taxation, valuation, planning, climate change and environmental issues, liaising with government at all levels and writing widely on both policy and practice. He is an Assembly member of the European Group of Valuers' Associations (TEGoVA) and Vice Chairman of the European Valuation Standards Board.

Baroness Minette Batters



Crossbench Peer, House of Lords, Former President, National Farmers' Union

Baroness Minette Batters was appointed to the House of Lords as a Crossbench Peer in 2024, following six years as President of the National Farmers' Union. During her tenure, she became one of the most influential voices in British agriculture, guiding the sector through a period of change and championing the interests of farmers, food producers, and rural communities at the highest levels.

Alongside her public roles, Baroness Batters runs a successful mixed farming enterprise in South Wiltshire, which she built from a tenanted holding into a thriving business. Her enterprise includes beef, sheep, and arable operations, as well as diversified ventures such as a wedding and events venue, holiday accommodation, and a British cut flower business. She is widely respected for her integrity, energy, and lifelong dedication to British farming.

Sarah Baker



Head of Economics – Analysis, AHDB

Sarah Baker is Head of Economics at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), where she leads on trade and policy analysis across the agricultural sector. An agricultural economist from Wye College (Imperial College London) with a master's degree from SOAS, University of London, Sarah has more than 20 years' experience in animal health, trade, and agricultural policy.

Since the 2016 referendum, she has played a key role in assessing the implications of the UK's changing policy landscape, providing insight on the impact of agricultural reform and new Free Trade Agreements. Sarah's work continues to inform industry, government, and stakeholders as they navigate the evolving challenges and opportunities facing UK agriculture.

Professor Paul Wilson



Professor of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Science, University of Nottingham

Paul's research centres on agricultural economics and farm business management, with particular expertise in agricultural policy, efficiency, and productivity analysis. His work explores how management decisions, biographical factors, and market conditions influence farm business performance across sectors such as potatoes, wheat, and dairy. Drawing on extensive data from the Farm Business Survey for England, he applies advanced econometric techniques to understand behavioural change, efficiency variation, and responses to agri-environmental and market price signals.

His wider research examines the relationship between farm practices, environmental sustainability, and food systems—from bioenergy feedstock supply and sustainable intensification to food market analysis and consumer behaviour. Paul's work continues to inform agricultural policy, business strategy, and environmental resilience in both UK and international contexts, including collaborative projects on smallholder sustainability in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Our Farmer Panel

We welcome our panel of northern farmers, joining us from across Scotland and the North East. Chaired by Jenny Oglesby, this discussion will tackle the core challenges facing agriculture today. They will share practical strategies for building profitable and future-proof farm businesses. Please welcome our panel members...

Jenny Oglesby

Northumbrian Farmer (beef & sheep), Longhorsley

Jenny Oglesby will be chairing this year's panel. She is a co-owner of R & J Oglesby Farming, a New Entrant Farming business based in Rothbury, Northumberland, which she runs with her husband, Richard. As first-generation farmers, they have built their enterprise with minimal infrastructure. Their core business at Meadow Farm is the sustainable production of Beef, Lamb, and Red Deer, with a sole focus on a resilient forage-based system.

Graham Rutherford

Northumbrian Farmer (beef & sheep), Longhorsley

Graham, of Longhorsley, Northumberland, runs a 1,700-ewe flock in a pure forage-based system focused on simplicity and efficiency. His all-outdoor lambing system, using Primera sires, ensures 90% lambing in the first cycle with minimal labour. This strategy results in a 160% lambing average, with the entire crop sold within a single week in August at just 10–12 weeks of age, demonstrating a highly profitable and sustainable low-input model.

Helen Marsden

Livestock farmer Dumfriesshire

Helen farms with her husband, Tom, on a contract farming agreement in Moniaive, Dumfries and Galloway, having successfully transitioned from a teaching career in Lancashire to running their own farm business. They manage a 1,600-acre upland unit running 1,500 sheep and a 100-head herd of cattle (Luings and Luing crosses). Helen and Tom are committed to sustainable practices, including environmental schemes and exploring regenerative grazing methods on their Scottish upland farm.

Duncan Morrison

Livestock (Aberdeen Angus) farmer, Aberdeenshire

Duncan Morrison, who runs Meikle Maldron in the North East of Scotland with his wife Claire, moved to the farm in 2016. They manage a 248ha, three-farm, wholly suckler enterprise. Their operation comprises 250 cows and heifers going to the bull in 2024, including commercial and pedigree Aberdeen Angus, alongside Stabilisers. Duncan will discuss their goal to increase profitability and performance, detailing their management of both owned and leased herds, their commitment to breeding 50 heifers annually, and how their homegrown arable silage and kale support their system.

Thomas Todd

Farmer at Barelees Farm, Cornhill on Tweed

Thomas Todd, who farms at Barelees Farm, Coldstream in the Borders, is a third-generation farmer managing the 260ha arable unit that has been in his family since 1987. Thomas is deeply committed to improving soil health and sharing his farm-scale work with fellow growers. His focus is on minimal soil disturbance and the strategic use of cover crops to enhance soil organic matter and nitrogen efficiency. Thomas leverages technology to produce bespoke seed rate plans for his rotation (which includes wheat, spring barley, and oilseed rape) in his ongoing quest to achieve the full yield potential of his land.