

Farming Focus

Special guest confirmed

ANDREW STEWART

The special guest at this year's Orkney County Show will be John Scott (pictured), of Fearn Farm in Easter Ross.

Mr Scott is no stranger to Orkney's agricultural scene, and many will have known him for some time — however, earlier this year, his profile was raised when, along with his family, he was featured in a series of programmes on farming life, which was shown on BBC Scotland.

The series, called *This Farming Life*, was very well received, and was credited with showing an accurate picture of Scottish farmers' lives, including both the highs and lows.

Mr Scott, who runs a lowland mixed farm, with around 4,000 sheep of various breeds, 230 beef cattle and cereal crops, said he is very much looking forward to returning to Orkney for the County Show.

Referring to his television appearances, he says farmers "don't have to be on the telly to get in touch with their consumers."

Mr Scott has judged both sheep and cattle at a few of Orkney's agricultural shows in the past, and has been a regular visitor, both playing and coaching rugby.

He was filmed sporadically for *This Farming Life* from September, 2014, through to June, 2015. He said going into the filming, he had hoped it would promote Scotland's wider agricultural industry, benefit his own business and give his children confidence for the future.

Since the series was shown this spring, he claims to have seen all three of these benefits, but what he is really proud of is how well the programmes have been received by the general public and farming community.

He said: "The people who made the programmes did a great job.

"It was edited really well, and the kids enjoyed being involved in it too. It was only a two-man crew that did it, a camera person and a sound person, and we got to know them really well.

"They were a bit like family by the end of it. They were here maybe here once a week or so, and were with us for a ten-day spell once. We got on really well with them; they fitted in.

"Nothing was staged, we just got on with it — they filmed us through the good times and the bad times.

"I think when we filmed things that had to be carefully handled in the edit, we said to them 'look guys, heads up, just make sure you handle this right', and they did.

"There were also times when they left things out, and quite rightly so, but we did film things as they happened. When we filmed two caesarians, particularly the cattle one, I was nervous at how that would be handled in the edit, but our vet is a very professional guy, and he likes amateur dramatics, so he was delighted."

Mr Scott laughed: "Don't get me wrong, there were some times when you thought 'oh no, this again' but it was a very good experience overall."

Asked about the challenges of promoting Scotland's agriculture to the general public, Mr Scott was very keen to stress that farmers don't need to go on the television to get a message across — there are a variety of tools being used to show people what the lifestyle of a farmer entails.

He said: "I think all farmers have a roll to play in trying to educate people about what they're doing and why.

"I think the public do want to know how their food is produced and what's going on in

rural areas.

"You don't have to go on telly to do that — you can be in the queue of the chip shop or the supermarket. It's just about basic communication, and I think, as an industry, we need to work on our communication skills.

"A classic example is using social media — a great example is Joyce Campbell in Sutherland, who has followers all over the world on Twitter and Facebook. She tells people all about how hill sheep

farming works, and what she does and why. She's a tremendous ambassador for the industry."

Mr Scott said he will be showing livestock at the Nairn and Black Isle shows, on Saturday, July 30, and August 3, respectively, before coming up to Orkney for the 2016 County Show, which is to be held on Saturday, August 13.

A full preview of Orkney's agricultural shows will be included in next week's edition of *The Orcadian*.



Sheep festival under way

A foggy start made way for clear skies and sunshine, as the first day of the North Ronaldsay Sheep Festival got under way.

Volunteers arrived from far and wide, with people coming from Amsterdam, Ireland and all parts of the UK, to work alongside familiar Island faces in their efforts to re-build the storm-damaged sheepdyke.

A preliminary group of 17 soon swelled to 28, with ages ranging from 12 to several times that number.

Effort surpassed all expectations, and a staggering 40 paces of sheepdyke were rebuilt from scratch — a special mention must go to Ronan Gray, 14, for his Herculean efforts shifting flagstones for six hours.

With more volunteers set to arrive in the coming days, the island is busy putting on workshops, exhibitions, tours, a dance, and, of course, the island's famous Sheep Pund. Keep up to date on www.nrsheepfestival.com

Kate Traill Price



The volunteers who helped to rebuild a large section of the storm-damaged sheep dyke.

(Kate Traill Price)

AuctionMarts

Orkney Auction Mart

Forward for sale on Monday were 23 prime cattle, one store heifer and 14 OTM cattle.

Prime heifers sold to 209p/kg for a Charolais, scaling 520 kilos, from J. & R. Stanger, South Seatter, Sandwick, realising £1,081.60, purchased by E. Flett, Butchers.

Top price per head was £1,303.40 for a Charolais, scaling 665 kilos, from Glen Orkney Farms, St Ola (196) purchased by Craigie's butchers.

Other prime heifers: Holland, Papa Westray, 525, £1,023.75, 195, AA Lingro, St Ola, 565, £1,107.40, 196, Char Grandon, Finstown, 605, £1,222.10, 202, Char Campston, Toab, £1,252.40, 202, Char.

Prime steers sold to 206p/kg for a Charolais, scaling 580 kilos, from J. & R. Stanger, South Seatter, Sandwick, realising £1,194.80, purchased by E. Flett, butchers.

Top price per head was £1,353 for a Charolais, scaling 550 kilos, from Glen Orkney Farms, St Ola (205), purchased by Craigie's butchers.

Other prime steers

The Knowe, Sanday 595, £1,207.85, 203, Char Staye, Deerness £1,329.75, 205, Lim.

OTM cattle sold to 133.3p/kg for a Shorthorn cow, scaling 555 kilos, from S. Sailor, Banks Farm, Rousay, realising £740.

Top price per head was £990 for an Aberdeen-Angus cow, scaling 760 kilos, from Rendall, Holland, Papay (103.3).

Other OTM prices

Holland, Papa Westray 715, £880, 123.1 AA, 685, £830, 121.2 AA; The Knowe, Sanday, 645, £790, 122.5 AA, 685, £855, 124.8 AA; Lingro, St Ola 680, £795, 116.9, Here; Lower Cornquoy,

775, £970, 125.2, AA.

Sheep

Forward for sale on Monday were five new season lambs, 11 old season lambs, 11 store hogs and 27 cast sheep.

New season lambs sold to 157.7p/kg for a pen of four Texels, scaling 52 kilos, from J. S. & M. M. Sinclair, Eastside, Twatt, realising £82, purchased by Williamson's.

Old season lambs sold to 140p/kg for a black hogg, scaling 48 kilos, from J. M. & L. J. Girvan, Mossclair, Tankerness, realising £67, purchase by Craigie's butchers.

Store hogs sold to £47 for a pair of Suffolks from G. R. T. Scarth, Twatt Farm, Birsay.

Cast ewes sold to £88 for a pair of Texels from Glen Orkney Farms, St Ola.

Aberdeen & Northern Marts

A total of 41 store cattle, eight breeding cattle, 22 cows & OTMs and 35 sheep were forward from Orkney and Shetland consignors, with leading prices as follows:

Store Cattle

Bullocks to a top of 261p per kg for a 272kg Charolais from A. & P. Thomson, Quoydam, South Ronaldsay and £1,260 gross for a pair of 622kg. Charolais from N. & D. Chalmers, Upper Lea, Stromness.

Heifers to a top of 244.5p per kg for a 462kg Limousin and £1,220 gross for a 500kg Limousin from R. J. Taylor, Brencherhouse, Birsay.

Leading prices per head and kg:

Bullocks

Leading prices: Up to 250kg — Quoydam £555, 233.2p Lim. 251-300kg — Upper Lea £710, Char; Quoydam £670, 228p Lim. 301-350kg — Crowtaing, Longhope £725, 215.7p BB;

Quoydam £675, 209.6p Lim.

351-400kg — Crowtaing £865, 220.6p 226.1p BB. 401-450kg — Crowtaing £875, 220.6p Sim. 451-500kg — Crowtaing £1,055, 211p Sim. 551-600kg — Crowtaing, £1,120, 198.6p Sim. 601-650kg — Upper Lea 202.5p Char.

Heifers

301-350kg — Crowtaing £820, 238.3p BB. 351-400kg — Crowtaing £820, 206p Sim. 451-500kg — Upper Lea £1,090, 221.5p Char; Brencherhouse 244p Lim. 551-600kg — Upper Lea £1,170, 201p Char.

Breeding cattle sold to £1,620 for a British Blue heifer with heifer calf at foot from S. Laird & Co, Pole, Burray.

Leading prices: Lim — Pole £1,600. Breeding bull — Char 3 yo How, Sanday £1,300.

Cows & OTMs

Beef cows sold to 164.7p per kilo for a 610kg British Blue from N. & D. Chalmers, Upper Lea and to £1,175 gross for a 770kg British Blue from B. Baillie, Sebay Farm, Tankerness.

Leading prices: Diamonds, Deerness £1,075, 143.3p; Upper Lea £1,005; Sebay £975, 152.6p; Weddell, Burray £955, 135p; Diamonds £915, 143.3p; Lower Hobbister, Stenness £815, 135.8p; Hyval, Sandwick £795, 128p; Quoydam £735, 141p.

OTM Clean sold to 179p per kilo and £1,056.10 gross for a 590kg. Aberdeen-Angus bullock from J. Brown, Hackland, Dounby.

Leading prices: Hackland £924, 168p.

Sheep — Ewes

Leading prices: Cont - Kierfield, Sandwick £64.50.