Agricultural Business Management Course Royal Agriculture College Cirencester.

Stimulating Future Agricultural Managers

*The 61st Agricultural Business Management Course at Cirencester was a great success and exceeded the delegate’s expectations as presented to the Worshipful Company of Farmers on Friday, 10 February 12. There were 18 delegates on the course, 15 from the UK, one from New Zealand, one from Australia and one from Germany. The mix of the group in terms of UK and non-UK delegates was considered to be just right but only one lady! As a suggestion for future courses delegates from other parts of the food chain or from other countries were considered to be of great value for the course.*

It was a success for the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester because all the delegates agreed that staying at a traditional College gave the course the atmosphere that was needed. It was greatly appreciated that by staying at the college and to mixing with students was clearly a great opportunity for the participants of the course to escape their daily routine for three weeks. On top of that the facilities at RAC, including the excellent catering at the college were very good and just suited for the purpose.

Professor John Alliston from the RAC supported by Rhonda Thompson and Rita Walsh conducted the course and set the right tone throughout the three weeks. He very successfully managed the group dynamics and encouraged every single delegate to participate and take the challenge. He himself set a great example on strict time management throughout the course, which everyone respected and appreciated.

The top class speakers such as Prof David Hughes, Robert Lawton, John Wibberley, John Alvis, Charles Wilson (Booker) and Caroline Drummond – just to name a few – set a high standard to the course. Beyond any expectations was the visit of Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne in the first week. She chaired a discussion panel about the future of Agriculture with Prof Alan Buckwell, George Dunn (tenant farmers association) and Tom Hind (NFU). The interaction between speakers and delegates worked very well in most cases and was a fundamental part of the course.

Over the three weeks, the delegates had to work on three different case studies, one on their own business, one on Waitrose and one on a dairy farm in Wiltshire. Split into groups of four or five and working to tight deadlines, the participants of the course enjoyed lively group dynamics and viable results. Knowledge that had been part of the lecturing agenda could immediately be implemented. The case studies were not only interesting in terms of content but as well in terms of collaborating and encouraging people to work as a team.

The guest speakers at the dinners along with excellent catering at RAC allowed for distinguished socialising on the one hand and for having great fun on the other hand. The

Sponsors dinner was a particularly interesting event where the speaker was Prof Mike Young of Adelaide University who runs the environment faculty. He told the audience about the water licence trading scheme now running in Queensland as a method of equalising demand for the scarce commodity.

As expected, the Advanced Agricultural Business Management Course is not supposed to be just a great way of transferring knowledge but even more an opportunity for all delegates to create friendships amongst each other that will last. For the 61st course, this has worked particularly well. Therefore, this is a corporate “thank you” on behalf of all delegates to the Worshipful Company of Farmers and a wake-up call for anyone who feels inspired to apply to one of the next courses. Information will be found on the net at [www.farmerslivery.org.uk](http://www.farmerslivery.org.uk).

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