

# Balmoral News

Winter Edition 2024



## Message from the President

As autumn gives way to winter, it is appropriate to reflect on a busy few months of agricultural shows and events. From the excitement of Balmoral Show to those local and national events where many of our members have again demonstrated their dedication and passion for showcasing the best of farming and food.

I would also like to congratulate the team on being shortlisted for the 'Best Use of Social Media in Tourism' category at the NI Social Media Awards and the new 'Farming Society of the Year' category at the NI Farming Awards. Congratulations also to a number of Society members who have been shortlisted for various awards – truly a testament to the breadth of talent within the RUAS family.

The Eikon Exhibition Centre has a busy schedule of events ahead, and we are particularly excited for the Royal Ulster Premier Beef & Lamb Championships on 26th November and the Royal Ulster Winter Fair on 12th December. Both events

promise to be excellent showcases of our livestock sector, and I encourage all members to attend and support these important dates in the agricultural calendar.

As we continue to celebrate the Society's 170th anniversary, we are also thrilled to launch our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan, which sets out the way forward for the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society. This milestone is a fitting time to reflect on our rich heritage and the role we play in Northern Ireland's agricultural industry.

Finally, as we move toward the festive season, I would like to encourage everyone to consider

recruiting new members to our ranks. Whether it's a family member, friend or business associate, bringing them into the Society could be a wonderful Christmas or birthday gift, helping us to grow and strengthen the Society in the years ahead.

Thank you again for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

John Henning OBE,  
RUAS President



# Update from Group Executive Director



Autumn 2024 has been a particularly busy period within the Society, with final preparations for the Royal Ulster Premier Beef & Lamb Championships and the Royal Ulster Winter Fair underway.

In recent months, the Society's livestock committees have met to reflect on the 2024 Balmoral Show and advise on the requirements for next year. Subsequently, the Society's staff have reviewed the agreed actions and preparations for the 2025 Show are picking up pace. The Society and staff are indebted to the committee members for their commitment and the generosity with which they continue to share their expert knowledge for the betterment of the Society. Looking forward, the Eikon Exhibition Centre has a busy calendar in 2025 with several new events, including Love Your Home & Love Your Food, Knitting & Stitching Show, Selfbuild Extend & Renovate Show and BEPEX.

At the Society's Council meeting on 4th October, I had the privilege of presenting the Strategic Plan to the Society's Council, culminating months of engagement,

review and reflection. I am grateful to the Strategic Steering Group, under the chairmanship of Robin Irvine, for their guidance and input during the strategic review process. I would also like to thank everyone who participated in the process through focus groups and stakeholder engagement, as well as those who provided feedback through the surveys issued.

A copy of the Strategic Plan will be issued to each member of the Society shortly, and I will provide Society members with regular updates on the progress in future editions of the Balmoral News.

Theresa Morrissey,  
Group Executive Director

## The Royal Ulster Premier Beef & Lamb Championships

Tuesday 26th November 2024



Later this month the Society will host the seventh Royal Ulster Premier Beef & Lamb Championships at the Eikon Exhibition Centre.

The renowned show and sale will feature a full programme of beef and lamb showing classes and culminate in the lively auction in the evening. Beef cattle will once again compete for the coveted title of Supreme Champion and to be awarded the renowned Allam's Cup, with lambs shown on the day competing for the prestigious title of Best Butcher Pair.

This year the Society is excited to announce a **new special award** for the highest placed exhibitor bred animal in each of the cattle sections. The winner will be awarded the Rodgers Family Perpetual Cup and crowned the **Bred & Fed Champion**.

On the day showing will commence at 10:15 am and the lively auction will kick off at 4:30 pm. RUAS members enter free of charge when their valid membership card is

presented, and all other visitors can purchase their tickets upon arrival.

For further information please visit our revamped website and social media channels:

[www.beefandlamb.org.uk](http://www.beefandlamb.org.uk)



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# The Royal Ulster Winter Fair

## Thursday 12th December 2024



The prestigious Royal Ulster Winter Fair will return to the Eikon Exhibition Centre on Thursday 12th December 2024.

Hosting high quality livestock, this premier dairy event will also showcase almost 200 trade stands and provide the ultimate networking opportunity for farmers, enthusiasts and industry leaders in the run-up to the festive season. Once again, entrants will compete for over £16,000 of prize money and the coveted title of Supreme Champion.

Showing will commence at 8:30 am and tickets can be purchased online in advance of the event. RUAS members can enter free of charge by presenting their valid membership card at the admission kiosk.

For further information please visit our revamped website and social media channels:

[www.winterfair.org.uk](http://www.winterfair.org.uk)



## Message from Danske Bank

As we prepare to gather at the Royal Ulster Winter Fair and reflect on the past year, it's likely one that many will be eager to bid farewell to, with hopes that 2025 will bring not only a better trading economy but also more favourable weather conditions—both of which are essential given this year's challenges.



Danske Bank

The challenges faced by the dairy sector are undeniable. While feed costs have slowly decreased, other input costs have remained stagnant. Although milk prices have somewhat recovered, many primary producers have not felt the benefits due to the impact of a particularly wet summer. Moreover, changes to farm support payments have begun as evolving policies aimed at meeting net-zero transition goals demand our attention. It is imperative that we demonstrate agility to adapt to future changes.

During these demanding times in our sector, we recognise the financial constraints, rising costs and shrinking profit margins you are experiencing. However, it's important to also acknowledge the advantages at hand. The dairy industry in Northern Ireland provides an advantageous setting for primary producers, supported by various elements that can beneficially influence businesses and livelihoods. Our region enjoys a mild climate, superb market access, and our producers exhibit a resilience that surpasses that of many international counterparts.

The Winter Fair offers an ideal stage for engaging stakeholders on strategies to manage or adapt to these prevalent challenges, highlighting numerous innovative solutions designed to enhance efficiency and support

the environmental sustainability of your operations. Moreover, it serves as a display for the continuous progress in the genetics of dairy cows in Northern Ireland, emphasising enhancements in productivity and sustainability.

At Danske Bank, we proudly mark two centuries of collaboration with farmers, helping them tackle evolving challenges. In today's shifting landscape, the emphasis on sustainability and environmental stewardship is more critical than ever. We recognise the need to harmonise modern agricultural demands with environmental conservation, adapting to new agricultural policies, and continuing to support food production for a growing global population.

As proud sponsors of the Royal Ulster Winter Fair, the Agri Team at Danske Bank is dedicated to supporting you through these challenges. We are committed to nurturing enduring relationships with our farming community, aiming to secure a thriving and sustainable future for the agricultural sector.

**Rodney Brown**  
Head of Agribusiness, Danske Bank

# What's Next?

As we approach the end of 2024, the office and grounds staff are working towards delivering two of the Society's industry leading agri shows, not to mention looking ahead to a fully packed schedule of external events in the Eikon Exhibition Centre. Here's a taster of what you can look forward to over the coming months.

**Can You Dance? Live NI:**

Sunday 24th November 2024

**Royal Ulster Premier Beef & Lamb Championships:**

Tuesday 26th November 2024

**Royal Ulster Winter Fair:**

Thursday 12th December 2024

**Spring Farm Machinery Show:**

Wednesday 29th – Thursday 30th January 2025

**Love Your Home & Love Your Food Show:**

Friday 7th – Sunday 9th March 2025

**UCAS Education Convention:**

Wednesday 19th – Thursday 20th March 2025

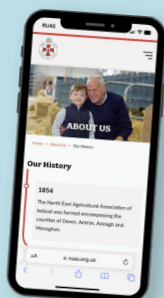
## RUAS Membership Rates 2025

	Membership Rates	Membership Rates with Direct Debit Payment	
Life	£1,463	£1,463	Instalments by direct debit
Junior	£24	£22	Under 12 years old
Youth	£32	£29	Under 18 years old
Young Farmer	£30	£27	Under 30 years old with YFCU valid membership
Adult	£58	£54	18 years old and above
Corporate	£334	£334	1 employee per year for 3 years
Senior	£44	£40	Over 65 years old
Family	£139	£129	2 adults & 2 junior/youth

## Head Online for more

Don't forget, we regularly update the RUAS new website with the latest on activity across the Society. From RASC Next Generation delegate reports to awards finalists and so much more.

**Please visit**  
[www.ruas.org.uk](http://www.ruas.org.uk)



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