

South West Farmer 2024 Category Criteria



Apprentice of the year

We are keen to recognise the dedication and enthusiasm that young people are bringing to the industry. Passion for the job and a keenness to learn are key. Being a team player, communicating effectively and taking responsibility for their actions are vital. Whether they're learning to manage livestock or crops, the Apprentice of the Year is making an impressive contribution to the farm and the team. This is a chance to celebrate their growing skills and achievements.

Family-Run Farm of the Year

We want to recognise the families who are at the heart of farming around the region. As a family unit you will have worked together through generations to overcome obstacles and adapt to changes in order to maintain a sustainable business, securing your family's place in south west farming for its future generations. You will have kept with family traditions, but also adapted to new ways of farming which allow you to compete in a changing environment. You will credit your team work as pivotal to your success.

Beef Farmer

This award recognises the skills of a beef farmer who has shown an outstanding, unique and tailored approach to the breeding, rearing and finishing of healthy livestock, with high values of animal welfare as a key priority. A strong grassland and forage management strategy will be evident, alongside a strong identity within the beef farming community. The integration of new approaches and technologies specific to the sector will be a key part of business development and future planning.

Dairy Farmer of the Year

We are looking to reward a dairy farmer that has an outstanding approach to animal welfare, with herd health a key priority. Keeping up with the latest innovations and cutting-edge technologies within the sector, we are looking for future-thinking dairy farmers. Environmental considerations and innovations within dairy will be rewarded, alongside an active contribution to the community in a wider sense.

Sheep Farmer of the Year

We are looking to recognise the skills of a sheep farmer who has demonstrated a comprehensive approach to the management of their flock. This should include consideration of the breeding programme, selection of rams, parasitic control, grassland management, rationing protocols and measures of performance. We want to reward those that have gone the extra mile, whether in terms of animal welfare, contribution to the community, being a voice for sheep farmers or

sustainability.

Young Farmer of the Year

Young farmers are in a unique position to be able to be creative, innovative and forward thinking, and this category aims to recognise and reward those achievements. Whether it's coming up with new ideas or making changes, campaigning for farming causes or championing progressive ideas and causes within the farming community, this award celebrates the contributions and fresh approaches of the next generation of farmers.

Outstanding Achievement

This category is looking to recognise those that have overcome adversity to succeed within the agricultural industry. We want to recognise individuals who have demonstrated resilience and made farming or a farming-related business work for them against the odds. Do you know someone who deserves to be recognised for their individual farming story, personal achievements or stoicism? This award is a chance to recognise farming's un-sung heroes.

Sustainability Champion of the Year

This award seeks to recognise and celebrate the huge efforts that some farmers are putting in to make a positive contribution to the wider natural environment in the south west. We aim to recognise those that are actively making a difference and inspiring others towards positive change, whether that is through taking efforts towards increasing biodiversity, improving soil quality, reducing pesticide usage, reducing emissions, utilising green energy sources or improving water management. Measures taken to making an impact on the wider community will also be rewarded.

Inspirational Woman in Agriculture

In 2018 about 17 per cent of farmers were women, according to the Office of National Statistics. If this seems low, it's still 10 per cent more than in 2008. This new award is to showcase the success that female farmers are achieving not just to celebrate them, but to inspire and encourage others to join the agricultural world. These women are succeeding despite being under represented in their workplace. Flying in the face of traditions takes courage and resilience. What stereotypes are they fighting against? What challenges does a woman face in the agricultural sector that differ from men? Whether it's the creation of a successful business, an expertise in a particular area of farming or the positive effect they've had on others around them, these women are role models to all.

New Entrant/Tenant Farmer

This award is dedicated to the farmers who have not inherited a farm and who possibly do not even come from a farming family. It takes a certain grit to start a farming enterprise from the ground up. Determination and resilience are vital, but vision is the key to success. How has this farmer made his vision a reality? What inspired them to even try? What is it that is making their farming enterprise a success? What obstacles have they overturned to create what they have today? This is an exciting new award that is intended to shine a light on farmers who are following a dream, carving out their business with planning, research, action and a thirst for knowledge.

The Diversification Award

This category is seeking those who are adding value to the core farm business while farming their land in an effective and progressive way, thinking outside the box! This could be through a non-food business (such as setting up a caravan park, machinery repair/fabrication, opening a B and B, or running educational initiatives) or food business (such as farm shops, adding pastured poultry, cheese-making or a milk delivery scheme). The key criteria is showing how the diversification is adding to the business and helping to support and deliver a sustainable farm business. Entrants may also highlight examples of collaborative projects.

The Woodland Hero Award

There has been no better time than now to plant trees, as we respond as a nation to the climate and biodiversity crisis. As a Woodland Hero you will recognise the importance of planting trees and woodland. You will value woods and trees as new habitats to boost biodiversity, improving soil and water quality, sequestering carbon, slowing the rate of water runoff, possibly producing timber and providing access to a space that enhances health and wellbeing. It's not just about creating new woodland, managing existing woods can deliver all these benefits and will help to increase the resilience of our woodland. All woodland would need to meet the Forestry Standard and all applications would need to demonstrate that they have delivered their woodland objectives. The three categories are: Creating new trees/woodland, minimum size 1ha, 3-15 years in age; Returning woods into management, minimum size 1ha, from 15 years and must be in active management with a woodland management plan; creating a community woodland with public access for all, minimum size 1ha and any age.