



AWEL MAI HUGHES

Awel farms in partnership with her husband on their beef and sheep farm in North Wales. They have a herd of pedigree Welsh Black cattle and also work off-farm to sustain their new farming enterprise, as the farm was only purchased in 2019.

Awel is a Partner and Solicitor with specialist agricultural law firm, Agri Advisor. She has extensive experience in advising clients about wills and succession planning, probate and the administration of agricultural estates and Inheritance Tax planning. The Inheritance Tax regime in relation to business and agricultural property is of particular interest to Awel.

Awel studied Law at Aberystwyth University and then went on to the College of Law in Chester before qualifying as a Solicitor in 2013. A fluent Welsh speaker, Awel is passionate about providing rural businesses with holistic advice in relation to their tax and succession planning. Awel is a Fellow of the Agricultural Law Association, a member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners and a former NFU Cymru Next Generation Group member.



CAITRIONA CRAWFORD

I am the Northern Ireland national manager of the farming community network. A post recently created to deliver a UK wide project in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support; the Rural Communities Cancer Project. Through this project I'm able to use my professional expertise as a Therapeutic Radiographer and my personal background and upbringing in a farming family in Co Tyrone to help me really shape and deliver the project in NI. I'm very passionate about the project as it gives me an opportunity to advocate for those from a rural and farming community and to raise awareness of cancer and the support available for those impacted by cancer. Moreover however I am delighted in my new post as I get to delve into my personal background and upbringing in the farming industry. I'm aware of challenges that face these communities in accessing health care but to truly understand these challenges I am jumping at any opportunity to learn more to help better my knowledge and understanding of what is happening in the industry now and in the future. I am delighted to have been successful in my application to the inspire programme. It will be an incredible networking, development and learning opportunity. Meeting other like-minded individuals from various backgrounds and professions.



CLAIRE DONKIN

Claire took over the family business, Donkin Farms, in 2024 and is growing cereals and SFI on a small arable farm in Bedfordshire alongside her pre-existing horticultural agronomy consultancy.

Claire's horticultural career began in peat replacement back in the early noughties. Today, in addition to the farm, her work includes the running of C Donkin Ltd where she runs a small agronomy and technical team and undertakes roles as technical officer for the Asparagus Growers Association, British Herbs and Plant Propagators Ltd. Claire is also technical director of the producer organisation Westgrowers, Chairman of the European Minor Uses Group for Herbs and Spices and as a BASIS and FACTS qualified agronomist provides direct agronomy and trials consultancy across a range of growers. Claire is also a BASIS Commercial Horticulture Examiner.



EMMA STORY

Emma is a chartered rural surveyor with practical experience working as a resident land agent for a private landed estate and of upland livestock farms in Wales. She is currently the strategic lead for the National Parks and Landscapes of Wales on the topics of nature recovery and carbon sequestration. A role that is hosted by Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park Authority and involves working with the agricultural sector and others. Emma aims to support the creation of a socio-economic environment where land-based food and fibre production systems within which nature can recover are viable, accessible, and desired. Through the outcomes of her current role and future roles associated with land and farming, she hopes to be of benefit to a sector she cares deeply for.



JOE MARTLEW

Joe is a Research Agronomist at NIAB, based near Thirsk in North Yorkshire. He has a mixed background between industry as a commercial agronomist and academia as a soil scientist, working both in the UK and overseas. He is responsible for a diverse programme of applied research and knowledge exchange at NIAB, with a particular interest in soils, machinery and weed management. Joe has a strong interest in how farming systems can be designed to increase the sustainability and resilience of food production.



MICHAEL JARMUZ

Michael is Feedstock Development Lead for Future Biogas Limited. A BASIS, FACTS and Soil & Water management qualified agronomist with vast experience of agriculture within the UK advising farmers on a number of crops. Since joining Future Biogas over five years ago he has worked within their feedstock team advising a large number of growers on achieving best returns from forage for AD alongside the efficient use of digestate across their farming rotations.

Most recently Michael has turned his attention to the development of new crop fed AD plants throughout the UK as part of Future Biogas' "Project Carbon Harvest" promoting the benefits Bio-Energy Carbon Capture & Storage (BECCS) can bring to farms looking to enhance soil health, sequester carbon in soil and improving the resilience of their farming businesses whilst ensuring maximum quality and efficiency in both harvest/handling and biogas production from crop feedstocks.

Michael is also Vice-Chairman of the Maize Growers Association.



PETER GALLAGHER

Father of 3 boys, 6, 9 & 15

Live and farm in County Fermanagh, suckler hill cows and a small number of sheep. The land is all Severely Disadvantaged heavy clay soils. Weanlings are sold off farm at approx 9 months.

Work full time as High Nature Value farm Adviser with Ulster Wildlife Trust, advising farmers on how best to manage their land in accordance with the government funded agri environment schemes.

I act as a farm agent for a number of farmers also, looking after their basic farm payment scheme claims etc, and am registered with DAERA as an Agent.

I represent Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association (NIAPA) on the Agricultural Policy Stakeholder Group, which is an industry wide group of stakeholders who are working together with DAERA to co-design future agricultural support schemes.



RACHEL MARTIN

Rachel is the editor of the Irish Examiner's weekly farming supplement, where she has strived to challenge perceptions and stereotypes around farming in the media by showcasing the diverse faces and stories of farming.

Rachel has qualifications in both journalism and agriculture and specialises in writing about agtech, sustainability, and dairy. From a beef and dairy background in Northern Ireland, she has an interest in cross-border issues and has won several awards for her work, both within Ireland and overseas. She also regularly provides commentary on topical farming issues for mainstream broadcast media outlets.

In 2017, she was named one of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists' 10 Young Leaders in Agricultural Journalism and won a stipend for the annual congress in South Africa. In 2019, she won the IFAJ/Caterpillar Ag-Tech Reporting Award and was runner-up for the same award in 2020.

She has also served as chairman of the Northern Ireland branch of the Guild of Agricultural Journalists and currently sits on the international federation's Professional Development and Freedom of the Press Committees.



RORY LAY

Rory runs a mixed farm of 1,090 acres (440 hectares) in North Shropshire, rearing Aberdeen Angus cattle and Suffolk-cross sheep and growing crops using 'regenerative' practices. He joined the business in 2003 and runs it in partnership with his father and stepmother.

Rory is trying to reduce the amount of ploughing he does, and since 2017 has been using a "strip till drill", planting in narrow strips, moving half the soil that a normal planter would move. He says this sowing method is cheaper and has also improved the farm's soils too as they, and the organisms that inhabit them such as earthworms, are disturbed less. Over recent years Rory has swapped insecticides for flowers that attract beneficial insects – including ladybirds, lacewings, beetles and parasitic wasps – which tackle plant pests such as aphids. He's also planted areas with bird seed mixes and put in hedges and trees. These environmental measures appear to be paying off, as Rory says he's now seeing barn owls, skylarks and lapwings. He's even sighted an extremely rare black headed bunting.

Rory has always loved the outdoors. After 'A' levels he took a degree in agriculture at Seale Hayne in Devon, then travelled and worked in New Zealand and Australia during the English winters before returning home permanently.



SARAH GLAZEBROOK-MILNER

Growing up on my parents dairy farm in North Shropshire, I have always had a deep rooted passion for farming and food production. In my day to day life, no two days are the same. I am the co-founder of The Country Office in conjunction with my younger sister, offering bookkeeping and rural services. Since launch, we have developed our business year on year to offer a range of services including project management, grant applications and office administration. In addition, I am a co-facilitator of the North Shropshire Farmers Group, a cluster group that provides a collaborative and innovative led space seeking the next steps in sustainable farming. Finally, my husband and I run our own business contract rearing cattle for the beef sector. I have two children aged 4 and 2, a black labrador called Jazz and I love sports, competing regularly in triathlon and running events.



SARAH WADELIN

I am Senior Technical Manager at Minor Weir and Willis Ltd with 12 years of experience in Fresh Produce. Specializing in the key technical pillars I work with a wide range of fruit and vegetables; grown and sourced from the UK alongside Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. This produce is supplied to the public directly, through retailers, the UK government and a wide range of meal solution businesses and restaurants.

Graduating with a degree in Food and Consumer Studies from Harper Adams University in 2013, I have also completed my Masters in Food Sustainability from Lancaster University whilst working full time. Studying sustainability at a professional level has allowed me to build a wealth of expertise that I have actively implemented in my role; supporting farming for the future. Throughout my career, I have built and developed teams, coached suppliers and delivered numerous projects improving both technical and commercial KPIs. Travelling significantly allows me to see the realities of farming worldwide and tackle the numerous challenges being faced to deliver sustainable, responsible, safe and quality focussed produce into Europe.

Alongside my professional career I am also a mentor for The Girls Network, mentoring 14-17-year-old young women, empowering them to take on their chosen futures. I am also a governor for a local primary school and value learning, believing you never stop. It is important younger people understand agriculture and where food truly comes from.

At the weekends I'm renovating my 1800's house, restoring her back to former glory & spend time listening to podcasts whilst walking my dog, an English Pointer named Percy.



SIMON KING

Simon is a farm manager for J Wharton (Agriculture) Ltd. He manages a 2400ha business in North Lincolnshire. It is predominantly arable with a suckler herd. They operate a versatile cultivations policy, with all types considered depending on conditions and desired end result. He has a young family of 3 children whom all have the ambition to join the agricultural industry one day.



STUART OATES

Stuart is a 7th-generation organic farmer and environmental TV and radio producer, based on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. Following a degree in Organic Agriculture from the Royal Agricultural University and a master's degree in Multimedia Broadcast Journalism from Falmouth University, Stuart embarked on a varied career which included importing and running the largest camel farm in the UK, becoming the UK young farmer of the year for his innovative work on the family farm. Outside of farming, he became a live TV news producer and studio director for Euronews in France, produces Countryfile for BBC1 and reports for Farming Today on BBC Radio 4. Today he also works on a large number of projects within the farming sector including leading two innovative farmers trials which are building blocks for his overall long-term aim of developing fossil-free farming systems, removing all fossil fuels and single-use plastics. Alongside this, Stuart runs a company specialising in habitat creation, restoration, and protection.

Having travelled the length and breadth of the country and world meeting farmers and hearing their stories, Stuart is uniquely placed to offer a broad perspective on the state of the industry and offer insight into where we might look for opportunities in the future.



TRACEY DONAGHEY

I work as Ulster Farmers' Union communications officer and farm alongside my husband on a mainly upland, sheep and suckler farm on the outskirts of Limavady. In 2022, I was a recipient of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists/Alltech Young Leaders Award, which honours 10 young journalists and communicators.

Prior to joining the UFU in 2019, I worked as a journalist with Irish Country Living, supplement magazine in the Irish Farmers Journal (IFJ). I researched, analysed and wrote articles on agriculture, rural affairs, health, sport, careers and entertainment.

During this time with the IFJ, I was a finalist at the Guild of Agricultural Journalism Awards 2018 for Best Print Feature, co-written with a colleague.

I studied multimedia journalism, graduating with a first-class honours from Teesside University, 2017.



WILLIAM RICKARD

William is a dedicated soil scientist focused on promoting soil health and sustainable agricultural practices. With a strong background in soil science, his research focuses on the complex biophysical interactions within soil systems. His work centres on engaging with farmers and understanding how soil management and practices can improve soil health and increase crop yields and resilience while learning from their hands-on experience and insights. William is committed to bridging the gap between scientific research and practical applications in the field, fostering a collaborative approach to sustainable farming.