



'A Changing Climate' was the theme for the sixteenth annual Farming Scotland Conference where a record number of delegates heard how agriculture policy, weather patterns and business practices are likely to change and adapt over the coming years.

Leading agriculture policy adviser and Secretary of the CAAV Jeremy Moody began proceedings with an incisive talk covering the possible decisions government could take on land tenure issues and support funding. He suggested that there may be no alternative but to move financial support from Region 1 'up the hill' to address the shortfall in LFAAS funding.

A thought provoking talk from Dr Mike Rivington, Land Use System Modeller from James Hutton Institute followed, and Mike presented some alarming data on climate change and the impact that will have on the UK's ability to continue to farm the way we do at present. Southern parts of the UK will see the most significant rises in average temperatures over the coming decades, but Scotland will not escape changes to temperature, growing seasons, and rainfall.

The conference then gave a warm welcome to BBC's Countryfile Farming Heroes 2018, Kirsty and Aimee Budge. Since their award the sisters have gone on to become young leaders in the Scottish agriculture sector. Their monitor farm on Shetland is taking on new ideas and farming practices, they are re-establishing Shetland Young Farmers and they have also been announced as Young Farmer Climate Change Champions. Add to that TV stardom in the new series of This Farming Life and it's clear that the sisters have grasped their opportunity to share Scotland's positive farming story. Their own story, on their journey from sisters to business partners, was told from the heart and captivated the conference hall.

Fittingly, the conference was rounded off by Ben Pugh, founder and CEO of Farmdrop, the ethical grocer. Ben's vision for his business is to re-invent the supply chain, changing the dynamic between consumer and producer whilst changing the share of the financial rewards from that of the typical supermarket model. Supplying farmers market quality food with supermarket convenience is how Farmdrop aim to operate, which is much easier said than done. Farmdrop currently operates in the London area but has ambitions to grow throughout the UK. Ben's passion was clear to see, as was his business acumen.

Thanks to everyone who made the sixteenth Farming Scotland Conference a huge success, and we hope that delegates went away with much to think about and take into their own farming businesses.