



## NUFFIELD Farming Scholarships

Dear Nuffield Farming Scholar,

March is always a very busy month for Nuffield Farming which centres around the pre-CSC, the CSC and the March Board meeting, in total around 18 days.

Starting with the **Board meeting**, we now tie this in with the pre-CSC, in order for the Trustees to meet up with the new Scholars; this also saves costs on doubling up on movements from myself, Rupert and Jim.

The main agenda item again at the Board centred around financials, with a pleasing year to date (Q3) performance tied in with the signing off of Rupert's 3 year financial budget. When I wrote my first update in December 2024, I stated that the main objective of both mine and Jim's terms would be to bring the Trust into a position where we operate a surplus not a deficit, thus making sure we are truly "sustainable". Over the last 14 months some tough decisions have been made around spending, an increase in the amount we are asking alumni to donate each year and also around the cost to our sponsors of us delivering each scholarship. Rupert presented a 3 year budget to the Finance Committee which was then subsequently approved by the Board. This would see a slight operating surplus by year three which is great news. However, with all budgets (especially long-term ones) the key now is both delivering this on the ground with quarterly oversight by both the Finance Committee and the Trustee Board clearly will be important.

During the **Pre-CSC** we also welcomed HRH The Duke of Gloucester to the Royal Kennel Club to meet the new Scholars ahead of them setting off on their travels. This year the Trust has reached a major milestone as HRH has been our patron for 50 years. I would personally like to thank The Duke for the time he gives up for us; it is truly appreciated.

The pre-CSC is a few days in London each year where the new Scholars get to know each other ahead of what is always a hectic few weeks. It is also time where they can listen to a variety of industry speakers and get to grips with UK Agriculture from several angles. Thanks must go to all our speakers and in particular **Robbie Moore MP** and his team for yet another insight into the workings of our parliament. We also hosted the Nuffield Ireland team for 24 hours before we all jumped on the plane to Japan. Good luck to **Grainne Dwyer** as she starts her term as Chair of Nuffield Ireland.

The **CSC in Japan** was a truly excellent event with one of our own alumni, **2023 scholar Izak van Heerden**, brilliantly facilitating the whole conference. This was a remarkable effort from Nuffield Japan especially given they only had their first Scholar within the last 10 years. This year we had 91 Scholars from 18 countries with new country delegates including Malawi, Zambia and Taiwan. We were initially based near Osaka, then moving up to Mount Koya, an ancient Buddhist retreat some 800 metres above sea level. This was then followed by some time spent in Hiroshima, Kyoto and Tokyo as a short post CSC tour.

At the Nuffield International Board meeting **Chris Graf Grote** stood down as Chair following the end of his term and was replaced by Nuffield Ireland alumni **Mike Brady**. One challenge for the UK Chair is that we only have a two year appointment on the Nuffield International Board, whereas the other countries have a minimum of three. Year one you are very new to being your own country Chair and even newer at how Nuffield International works; by year two you are fully into the swing of things then of course that is the last face to face Board you attend before being replaced. The reality for us in the UK is we have a strong list of potential Chairs which means the two year term is the right thing to do, and the CSC is certainly a highlight you wouldn't want to miss. I have personally been made Chair of the Programs Committee at Nuffield International which I will certainly enjoy for the next 12 months.

Back to Nuffield UK business, following an excellent presentation at our Trustees' Away Day last year by Australian Chair **Jane Bennett** on their **impact report** on the benefit Scholars bring to the industry, we have decided to conduct our own impact survey. It is important that the Trust understands the impact the scholarship has had on all our Scholars and the wider agricultural industry. Every Scholar that completes the survey will go into a draw to win 2 free tickets to the 2026 Nuffield Farming conference in Leeds; **the survey closes 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026**. **Complete the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFSTImpact>**

Our **Next-Gen scholarship** initiative continues to grow, and I am pleased to report we have had 50 applications this year for the 3 dairy and 3 regen places. Originally tasked with engaging with younger people, forming a pipeline for the full scholarship and re-engaging alumni, it has also formed real ties with various agricultural colleges and universities, often overlooked as of course we don't normally engage with people until they are 25 years old. We are hosting an induction day for all six of the Next-Gen scholars in London at the end of April with the Regen tour kicking off on June 8<sup>th</sup> and the Dairy tour starting on 12<sup>th</sup> of June.

Could I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have paid their annual donation to Nuffield, this is hugely appreciated and critical to the delivery of the program. Could I also encourage anyone who hasn't donated to do so please. If you are unsure or need more information, please email [lindsay@nuffieldscholar.org](mailto:lindsay@nuffieldscholar.org).

Finally, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Triennial in Ireland in May.

Regards,

*T Rawson*

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