

British Cattle Breeding Conference Delegate Pack

Joining the Dots: From Blue Skies to Green Fields

Conference chair: Dr Alex Brown

19 – 21 January 2026

Telford Hotel & Golf Resort



Enter Pack



'Linking practical cattle breeding with science'

British Cattle Breeding Conference

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'Linking practical cattle breeding with science'

British Cattle Breeding Conference

Dear Delegate

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the club chair, Alex Brown, and the whole committee, to welcome you to the 2026 conference. This year is our fifteenth year at the Telford Hotel and Golf Resort, which provides excellent facilities including a golf course, swimming pool, gym and spa.

The committee have opted to reduce the amount of club paperwork within the delegate packs. Therefore, please follow the links within this pack for further information. We have not included a delegate list, however there are copies on the club reception desk if you require one, along with paper copies of the feedback form and programme.

BCBC Annual General Meeting – The club's AGM will be held on Tuesday afternoon at approx. 5.10pm in the Coalbrookdale Room. Everyone is welcome to attend. We have six vacancies on the committee this year. If you are interested in joining the committee, please feel free to come and speak with me. Further information on the committee members and the club can be found at www.cattlebreeders.org.uk/about/

A huge thank you is extended to everyone who has contributed in so many ways towards this year's conference, with special thanks to our speakers, sponsors and committee members for their continued support.

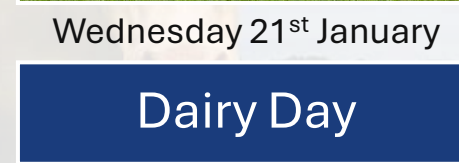
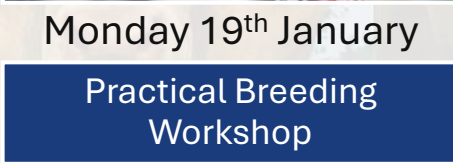
The club extends a warm welcome to members and non-members alike. If you are attending for the first time, we hope that you will make the conference a regular event in your diary. For more information on the club and conference please visit www.cattlebreeders.org.uk

Kind regards

Heidi

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Session 1 – Ideas with legs



Henry Blain is Head of Livestock at Sainsbury's, where he leads the supermarket's agricultural strategy across the livestock sectors, with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and strong supplier partnerships. With a career spanning roles at Tesco, the Royal Farms in Windsor, and a degree in Agriculture from the University of Reading, Henry brings deep expertise and a practical understanding of UK farming to the retail sector. A passionate advocate for future-fit farming, Henry works closely with stakeholders across the supply chain to drive responsible sourcing of quality meat, poultry and dairy.



Sarah Haire has worked for in the agri-food industry for over 20 years and is Head of Agriculture for the Dawn Meats Group which encompasses a varied workstream across the Dawn Meats and Dunbia business specifically focussed on agriculture and sustainability.

Sarah is past Chair of the UK Cattle Sustainability Platform, and the European Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, a Board member of Sustainable Ruminant Genetics in Northern Ireland and sits on the Red Tractor beef and lamb Sector Board Committee. She received a Nuffield Farming Trust Scholarship in 2007. Sarah, along with her husband William and 9 year old daughter, are also beef and sheep farmers based in Norfolk.



Scott Donaldson has worked in the livestock industry throughout his career, including 15 years at H&H. He began as a trainee auctioneer at Macdonald Fraser and Company (now UA Ltd) at just 17, becoming the youngest auctioneer to sell pedigree cattle at the Perth Bull Sales by age 21. His career has involved working closely with farmers, processors, wholesalers and butchers, continuing a family connection to the trade. Scott has held senior industry roles, including senior auctioneer at Hexham & Northern Marts, chair of the Cumbria Association of Livestock Auctioneers and President of the Institute of Auctioneers & Appraisers in Scotland. He currently serves on the AHDB Beef & Lamb Sector Council.

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Session 2 – When ideas take root



Jonathan Chapman runs Atlantic Angus, a 850-acre pedigree beef enterprise based in Cornwall and is both the 2025 Farmers Weekly Beef Farmer of the Year and Farmers Weekly Environmental Champion of the Year. Combining his experience as a farm animal vet with a passion for practical, data-driven farming, Jonathan has developed a system that produces efficient, sustainable and high-quality beef from grass. His talk will share how he has joined the dots between genetics, grazing and eating quality; using rotational grazing, data-led breeding, and real-world commercial testing to build a resilient, low-input suckler herd.



Andy Rumming grew up on the family farm and studied Agriculture at Reading before working with Defra and its agencies on EU-funded projects in diversification, food processing, training and animal health. After completing the Challenge of Rural Leadership in 2010, he returned home, launched a meat business and reduced his civil service role. He moved full time into the farm business in 2023, focusing on the suckler herd, on-farm butchery and leather goods made from the farm's hides. The Waterhay farm near Cirencester runs 90 pasture-based suckler cows producing 100% grass-fed beef through the new butchery. The enterprise is Pasture for Life accredited, with a focus on quality, nutrient density and biodiversity.



John Elliot leads the renowned Rawburn Aberdeen Angus herd at Roxburgh Mains, Kelso, recognised for over 25 years as one of the UK's highest-performing Angus programmes. Building on a 70-year legacy, John has consistently sourced elite global genetics while combining traditional stockmanship with modern performance recording, DNA technology and full genomic profiling of all calves since 2017. His disciplined, data-driven breeding philosophy keeps Rawburn at the forefront of Angus improvement, with a clear focus on long-term efficiency, resilience and value for breeders and commercial customers alike.

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Session 3

Does Innovation + Insight always = Impact?



Chris Lyons is the Agricultural Lead at Innovate UK Business Connect, working at the interface of innovation, funding and practical agriculture. With a background spanning innovation support, internationalisation, funding mechanisms and grassroots farming, Chris brings a broad perspective on how new technologies create real-world impact.

He works with a wide range of innovative businesses across all agricultural subsectors, helping them navigate funded programmes and develop solutions that improve productivity, sustainability and market readiness. His portfolio increasingly focuses on regenerative farming, low-emission systems and technologies that support the transition to more resilient, environmentally aligned production.



Dr Laura Palczynski is a researcher in the Engaging for Change group within the Centre for Social Science at Harper Adams University. Starting out with a degree in animal behaviour and welfare, completing a PhD exploring different human perspectives and priorities regarding dairy calf management and several years working in agricultural knowledge exchange. Her research now focuses on how people can work together effectively, considering factors such as mental health and wellbeing and communication and practicality of research recommendations for industry.

Session 3

Does Innovation + Insight always = Impact?



Katie Thorley, from Worcestershire, is a farmer's daughter who now lives locally with her husband and two young children. She graduated from Harper Adams with a BSc (Hons) in Animal Health and remained active in the YFC movement, taking on a variety of roles and competitions.

Her career began at CBS Technologies (later Innovis) before moving to EBLEX, which became AHDB, where she spent over 15 years working in knowledge transfer on the Better Returns Programme. Katie now works for ABP on the PRISM 2030 initiative, supporting producers to explore what is possible on farm in terms of sustainability. She is passionate about working with farmers and helping them make informed business decisions for the future.



Robert Neill farms at Upper Nisbet Farm in the Scottish Borders along with his wife Jaqueline, two sons Andrew and Harry. They farm 1700 acres rented from Lothian Estates with 1000 acres of cropping the rest in rotational grass supporting 400 Limousin cross suckler cows, with all the progeny finished on farm.

The Neill's have always been at the fore front of innovation and using technology when ever they see a benefit to their farming system and have always been improving the infrastructure on their farm to bring it up to a better standard for livestock.

Session 4 – Beyond borders



Ana Granados Chapatte has over 25 years' experience in European animal breeding, reproduction and farming policy. She holds a degree in Animal Breeding and Farming Science from the Polytechnic University of Madrid and has worked across the artificial insemination sector, Belgian cattle breeding organisations and the Wallonian Farmers Union, giving her a broad technical and policy background.

From 2018 to 2025 she served as Director of EFFAB and Secretary General of FABRE TP, representing Europe's animal breeders and researchers in EU discussions on health, welfare, reproduction and emerging genomic technologies. She has also served as a Vice President of the Animal Task Force. Since January 2026, Ana is the General Manager of ICAR, overseeing global guidelines, standards and certification for animal identification, recording and sustainable livestock evaluation.



A native of Hereford, England, Craig Lewis is a member of the PIC Global Product Development team, based in Barcelona, overseeing Genetic Services for the European, Russian, and African region and is active in PIC's global research program.

External to PIC, Craig is currently the chair of the steering committee for the European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB) and is on the advisory board for Science for Sustainable Agriculture (SSA).

Raised on the family pig farm, he has a degree in agriculture and a master's in animal welfare and behavior obtained in the United States. Craig completed his PhD at the Roslin Institute on quantitative genetics, and proceeded to a research fellowship at the Animal Breeding and Genetics Unit (AGBU) in Armidale, Australia. Craig has been published in numerous international research journals and contributed to extension projects all over the world. He joined PIC in 2011 and is now Commercial Director for Northern Europe.

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Session 5 – Ideas with legs



Dr Emma Gregson is the Environment Manager at Dairy UK, where she is responsible for overseeing the Dairy Roadmap; a UK-wide initiative that brings together farmers, processors, retailers, and others to improve the sector's environmental sustainability. Prior to her current role, Emma spent more than a decade in academia researching sustainable dairy farming and teaching agri-business and animal science. She received a PhD in Agriculture from the University of Nottingham and a BSc from the University of Leeds.



Dr Sophie Eaglen is a quantitative geneticist with a PhD in genetics and genomics from the University of Edinburgh. Before Edinburgh, she earned her Master in Animal Science degree from Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Dr. Eaglen has a background in science, global business development and geopolitics. In her current role with NAAB, Dr. Eaglen works with foreign officials, key industry stakeholders and dairy and beef producers to resolve trade barriers and promote the appropriate use of high-quality bovine genetics exported from The United States.

After several years in The United States, Dr Eaglen currently lives in The Netherlands with her husband and twin toddlers.



Andy Warne was Managing Director of National Milk Records for over 23 years, leading the organisation through major developments in milk recording, data services and the adoption of genetic and genomic tools. He recently joined the AHDB Dairy Sector Council, bringing long-standing industry insight to sector strategy. Andy is the current chair of the AHDB Genetics Advisory Forum (GAF), strengthening the connection between AHDB's genetics and genomics work and the farmers, advisors and breeding organisations who use it. In addition, he serves as a Non-Executive Director within the DeLaval Group, supporting innovation in dairy management and automation.

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Session 6 – IVF – Big gains or big gamble?



Rob Simmons is a Veterinary Surgeon at Paragon Veterinary Group in Cumbria. Having graduated from Glasgow Vet School he initially worked in mixed practice before specialising in production animal work in 2011. Since then, he has further developed his interest in advanced breeding techniques, particularly providing and continuing to develop the cattle IVF service.

As well as conducting the collection work for the commercial service, Rob is also involved in numerous research projects both supporting academic institutions and internally, which ensures that Paragon remains at the cutting edge of the industry. He is named in numerous publications, has also presented at the European Embryo Transfer Association (AETE) annual conference, and is currently undertaking a doctorate in various aspects of embryo production.



Christopher Bailey is a veterinary surgeon and fourth-generation dairy farmer from Cumbria. Since graduating in 2015, he has worked in farm animal practice while also being a partner in his family's 150-cow pedigree Holstein Friesian herd. The herd operates a seasonal-calving grazing system and achieves average yields of over 10,500 litres in 305 days. It is currently part of AHDB's Strategic Dairy Farms programme.

Breeding and genetics have always been a key focus, with the herd remaining completely closed for more than 60 years and using 100% AI all that time. They were early adopters of sexed semen (exclusively used since 2010) and began genomic testing all heifer calves in 2012. Today, the herd ranks in the top 1% nationally on PLI, and IVF is now being used on the highest genetic merit heifers each year.

Session 6 – IVF – Big gains or big gamble?



Keith is a Director at Huddlestone Farmers Ltd. having begun his career outside of agriculture and then at Genus ABS before moving home. He is currently responsible for 700 milking cows across two robotic herds in West Sussex in the family business.

In the past 3 years Keith has installed 12 Lely Robots, got married, had a two children, taken on a contract farming agreement and completed a Nuffield Scholarship so life has been fairly busy! The herd performance has significantly improved since the switch to robots with average yields of well over 3kgs CFP/cow/day. Consistently at the top of the PLI rankings; genetics remains a cornerstone of the dairy. The aim of the dairies is to let the cows express themselves to the best of their ability.



Ben Lewis is a Hereford cattle breeder based in Dilwyn, Herefordshire, working within the family business, E.L. Lewis & Son – Haven Herefords. He manages a 60-cow herd with followers as part of a wider mixed farming enterprise that includes cider apples, hops and arable cropping. Ben has incorporated both in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and multiple ovulation embryo transfer (MOET) to grow herd numbers and produce progeny from the herd's leading cow families, supporting the sale of high-quality breeding stock.

Session 7 – When ideas take root



A vet and lawyer, Matt Dobbs has spent time in academia (University of Sydney and Royal Veterinary College), before founding Westpoint Veterinary Group.

He is a Nuffield Scholar, recipient of the Bullock award and the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in Agriculture and Associate of the Royal Agricultural Societies. Matt is the founder & CEO of a vision livestock monitoring Agtech business Agsenze, chair of the MWI Clinical Advisory Board; the Digital Practice Lead for Stonehaven Consultancy; founder/Chair of digital businesses; FarmLaw.co.uk, HeckinGood, VetYou and the Animal Health Angels investment group. Matt is a trustee of RSPCA Assured and the humanitarian charity, PickUps for Peace.



Aled Davies is the Founder and Director of Pruex Ltd, established following his 2014–16 Nuffield Farming Scholarship on Alternatives to Antibiotics in Agriculture. Raised on a beef and sheep farm in West Wales, he has over 20 years' experience in agricultural sales and marketing, underpinned by a degree in food marketing from Harper Adams and a professional qualification in strategic marketing. Aled founded Pruex with a mission to reduce pollution, improve livestock health, and lead the fight against antimicrobial resistance through evidence-based, practical on-farm solutions. His work has been recognised by Public Health England through the Antibiotic Guardian award.



Cath Ratcliffe farms in partnership with her husband Ian at Weavian Farms in Devon, managing an autumn-block-calving herd of around 380 cows plus youngstock. Since starting the business in 2011, Cath has focused on healthy, productive cows and environmentally sustainable grassland management, supported by thoughtful use of automation and technology to improve efficiency and cow performance. She also runs Webbery Moos, the farm's on-site bottling enterprise supplying local shops across North Devon. Their commitment to excellent calf rearing was recognised nationally when Weavian Farms won the Youngstock Health & Welfare Award.

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Monday workshop

The Advisor's Guide to Bovine Breeding & Genetics

A practical, cross-industry workshop for anyone involved in breeding conversations on beef and dairy farms — vets, advisors, technicians, consultants, and wider industry partners

We'll cover the core genetic concepts and decision-support tools that help farmers make confident breeding choices, keeping it simple, relevant, and grounded in real farm situations.

Join live, interactive breeding-planning sessions with vets Tonia Simms and Sarah Tomlinson and farmers Mark Jelley and Andrew Rutter, where we'll work together to build a practical guide on how to have effective breeding discussions on farm. Whether you're a trusted advisor or part of the wider breeding and genetics sector, we're looking for your input in this session on what should be included in the guide.

We'll finish by gathering your insights on what advisors and vets need from the industry to support these conversations more effectively.



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Evening events

Wine Reception – On Monday evening we will have a wine reception starting at 6.30pm taking place in the lounge bar area, courtesy of [Neogen](#), followed by dinner in the restaurant.

Champagne Reception – On Tuesday evening we will have a pre-dinner champagne reception taking place in the lounge bar area courtesy of [Co-op](#)

Club Dinner – The beef served at dinner will be provided by [Jurassic Coast Fine Foods](#), and the table wine is courtesy of [Weatherbys Scientific](#). After dinner we will be raising funds for the [Farm Safety Foundation](#) 'Yellow Wellies' campaign with the 'Heads n Tails' game.

Dress code – Business Casual



Table plan – Though the tables are named after several conference sponsors, guests are welcome to sit at any table they wish regardless of table name. There will be a table plan available at the BCBC reception desk if you wish to reserve a table.

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Interacting with us digitally

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We will be using online Q&A during the conference sessions for speaker questions and feedback. Join in at <https://app.sli.do/event/iDbiHuErTvEzNRr8R9mz77> download the app or scan the QR code and use the passcode BCBC26



Social Media - Please feel free to tag us in on your social media posts.

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Tag us using **#BCBC26**



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Feedback

Your feedback is invaluable. We review all feedback in detail each year and use it to shape our future events – we can't do it without you!

We offer multiple channels for you to provide feedback:

1. We have a feedback wall in the corridor where you can leave your comments
2. Through the Slido poll at the end of the session
3. Fill in our [general conference feedback form](#)
4. Paper feedback forms are also available from the Club reception desk, once complete please leave it with a committee member, the AV technicians, or at the club reception desk.



Thank you.

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Visit our partners

A very warm thank you to our sponsors - their support allows us to deliver this conference each year, and we simply couldn't put it on without them. Please take a moment to visit the sponsor content on this page and the next, and engage with the resources they've shared.

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Sir John Hammond Award

Sir John Hammond founded the British Cattle Breeders Club in 1946 and later served as Club President.

BCBC partners with BISAS to deliver the Sir John Hammond Award, recognising individuals in research, teaching, advisory, farming, or allied roles who have made an outstanding contribution to animal science.

The 2025 recipient, Dr Craig Lewis, will address this year's conference. We are grateful to the Royal Smithfield Club for donating the Sir John Hammond Award trophy.

Nominations for the 2026 award are now open:

<https://www.bsas.org.uk/awards/sir-john-hammond-award>

Closing date for nominations: **31st January 2026.**



Who will join these distinguished recipients of the Sir John Hammond Award?
Nominations to be received by 31st January 2026

The Sir John Hammond Award is presented by

 Trophy kindly donated by the Royal Smithfield Club

For more information visit www.bsas.org.uk/awards/sir-john-hammond-award

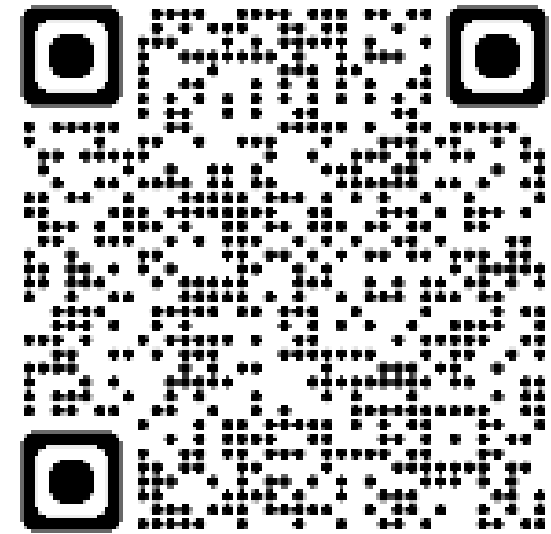
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Accessing talks after the conference

Talking Slides – The majority of the presentations from the 2026 conference will be available to view online 7-10 days after the conference. They can be viewed via the link on our website www.cattlebreeders.org.uk or <https://bcbc.talkingslideshd.com> or scan the QR code.

Once on the site, please click to 'Register' your email address and create a password, or if already registered please use your existing login details. Once registered you will be asked for a code to unlock the 2026 presentations. Please use the code: **bcbc26**





*Joining the Dots
From Blue Skies to Green Fields*



Thank You

Conference 2026

www.cattlebreeders.org.uk