INAUGURAL MEETING OF DYSLEXIA WORKING GROUP HELD

Milestone in NFUS campaign to better support dyslexic farmers and crofters

The inaugural meeting of the Farming with Dyslexia Working Group, led by NFU Scotland, took place earlier this week.

Chaired by the Union’s Vice President Rob Livesey, the group was established to ensure that Scottish farming stakeholders recognise the needs of dyslexic crofters and farmers in the most appropriate way.

Representatives from NFU Scotland, the Scottish Government’s Rural Payments Inspection Directorate, Forestry Commission Scotland, Dyslexia Scotland and Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) along with four farming and crofting members of NFU Scotland who have dyslexia attended the meeting on Wednesday (3 September).

Steered by NFU Scotland, this group was borne from the recognition that dyslexia is a real, but often hidden, issue among the farming community. With some 25 per cent of agriculture students at SRUC receiving support for dyslexia, it is believed this heritable condition is more prevalent within the farming sector than previously thought. However, due to stigma and poor understanding, it can remain undiagnosed and can be problematic for those dealing with communications, regulation and form-filling within the agriculture industry.

The Union recently launched a campaign to raise awareness of dyslexia amongst the farming community, whilst engaging with the Scottish Government, Dyslexia Scotland and SRUC to see how joint work can be undertaken to better recognise the issue and support those affected.

NFU Scotland Vice President Rob Livesey commented:

“Today’s meeting was a constructive one and a sound starting point for those keen to recognise the impact of dyslexia within our industry and what action we can take to help their situation.

“I believe we have a great bunch of people with vision and determination to make a difference. The contribution from those within the working group will be crucial to the success of this initiative.

“It’s now clear to myself and others that there is no one size fits all approach to helping those with dyslexia working within Scottish farming. However, there is a commitment to proactively help those that have or suspect they have dyslexia.

“As a group, our first objective is to continue to raise awareness and build on the work that we have started. The next task we have is to attempt to remove the stigma attached to dyslexia. We strongly believe as a group that there is huge potential to tap into the talent that dyslexic people in our industry have and help them recognise their own potential for the benefit of all.

“That ambition can be underpinned by engaging with all stakeholders to ensure the needs of those with dyslexia are taken into account and that all communications and regulations are available in a format appropriate for those with dyslexia.

“As a result we will be embarking on a campaign in the next few months to address those stated aims.”