

FARM NORTH EAST

EGGCITING WIN FOR CHAPMAN FAMILY IN GOOD FARMING PRACTICE AWARDS

A Buchan farming family which from small beginnings have built up one of the largest egg producing and packing businesses in Scotland have been named winners of this year's Royal Northern Agricultural Society Good Farming Practice award, sponsored by Aberdeenshire Council.

Husband and wife, Robert and Ethel Chapman, and son, Ian, trading as Chapman Farms, market around four million eggs a week to leading supermarkets – half from their own laying units of 260,000 birds at West Cockmuir, Strichen, and two other farms, and the other half from 22 contracted producers throughout the North-east.

The Chapman's have come out top just ahead of the runners-up, Ann Willis and his son, William, who run a 150-cow organic dairy herd at Glasgoforest, Kinellar.

Judge, retired agricultural consultant, Dr Gerald Banks, praised the "exceptional" management and attention to detail of both families.

"There was only one point in it at the end," said Dr Banks. "The Chapman's came out top in five of the nine criteria on which I based the judging and the Willis family were ahead in the other four. Both are fantastic examples of professional farm management and utilisation of assets which will give their businesses resilience for the long-term."

Provost Bill Howatson of Aberdeenshire Council, who presented the awards to both families at a ceremony at West Cockmuir, said both enterprises had set an "outstanding example" to others and commended the RNAS for recognising excellence in farm business management through the awards which the council had sponsored since 2005.

"As we head towards Brexit, we have few "known knowns", many "known unknowns" and goodness knows how many "unknown unknowns", he said. "We can however be totally certain that the leadership and inspiration provided by our exemplar businesses will be vital in helping Scottish farming adapt to future challenges."