**RNAS WINNING CROP GROWERS ANNOUNCED**

Rodney Blackhall, Banchory with a crop of Lomond swedes and Stewart Davidson, Mintlaw growing Brigadier fodder beet have triumphed in the RNAS swede and fodder beet growing competition for 2024.

Judge, Graeme Christie of event sponsors Murray Duguid Ltd, presided over 37 entries, 27 in the swede section and 10 fodder beet. Crops are judged on criteria including yield, uniformity of crop, soundness of bulbs and freedom from pest damage, weeds and disease.

“All entries forward had a very good crop and the weed management is getting better every year, keeping crops clean. Overall, crops were sounder than 2023, with less disease and better sized bulbs resulting in crops that will last better through to spring.” says Mr Christie.

Taking the overall championship in the swede category was Rodney Blackhall of The Green, Raemoir, Banchory who in partnership with his brother Alex grows 14 ha of Lomond, a variety Rodney has favoured and grown for over 20 years. The crop yield was 205.57t/ha and also picked up first prize for the LFA category.

“Lomond just suits our land, it regularly yields well and is quite frost hardy, we find it’s the most reliable.” says Rodney. The swedes are fed to tup and ewe hoggs from his pedigree Texel and Bluefaced Leicester flocks, commercial feeding hoggs and pedigree and commercial ewes later in spring.

“The crop was sown into a stale seed bed on 15th May having had plenty of FYM applied. Being a great spell of weather at that time, they got away to a really good start” added Rodney.

Three competitors tied for reserve championship including first time competitor Michelle Connon, Balladrum, Durris who achieved a yield of 143.28 t/ha with Lomond. Sharing the title with Michelle were I & G Pirie, Overton of Bruxie, Maud who yielded 144.65t/ha with Triumph and Keith Mitchell, Hopton, Skene, Westhill who yielded 123.84 t/ha with Lomond.

Michelle also took first prize in the Under 30 category with Liam Wink, Dykeneuk, Clatt taking the reserve spot with his crop of Magres yielding 79.73 t/ha.

Winning the championship for fodder beet for the second year in a row was Stewart Davidson, Kirkton, Mintlaw, growing Brigadier which yielded 144.59 t/ha.

“I’ve been growing fodder beet - mainly Brigadier and Bangor - since 2018 and prefer these as a lot of the bulb grows above the ground, ideally suiting them to strip grazing. We buy 2000 lambs from Shetland for finishing and strip graze them on the beet from Christmas onwards.” says Stewart. His winning crop was sown on 8th May.

Stewart also yielded 124.43 t/ha with Bangor to share the reserve champonship with Robert Anderson, Corsekellie, Rothiemay who grew Feldherr yielding 114.73t/ha.

Robert Anderson was also awarded first prize in the LFA and Under 30 categories with his crop of Feldherr.

A full list of winners is attached.

ENDS

30 January 2025

For more information contact RNAS secretary Fiona Davidson on 07795 570359 or secretary@rnas.info

The Royal Northern Agricultural Society (RNAS) was founded in 1843 by progressive farmers and landowners in North East Scotland, an area renowned throughout the world for the quality of its livestock and the stockmanship of its farmers.  The Society aims to “improve agricultural production and the rural economy in all its branches.” It is best known for a range of activities including the acclaimed annual Spring Show, competitions for growing cereals and turnips, awards for outstanding service to agriculture and encouragement of good farming practice.  The Society has also been able to give assistance to some very worthwhile causes, particularly countryside education for young people. To find out more, visit [www.rnas.org.uk](http://www.rnas.org.uk)