

UPSKILLING FARMING

The NFU has teamed up with the National Land Based College (NLBC) to provide farmers a platform to help steer how the industry develops its skills.

Farmers are encouraged to get involved with the Industry Skills Groups to directly input into how the sector develops and educates the future generation, right through to degree and higher apprenticeship programmes, as well as on-farm training and skills development for employees.

The group will operate virtually and engage via video conferencing, webinars and email, meaning you can contribute to the future education of farming from the comfort of your own home.

NFU Deputy President Minette Batters said: "Agriculture is a vital sector for the UK economy. We are the bedrock of the largest manufacturing sector, food and drink, which is currently worth £109 billion to the UK economy and employing one in eight people.

"The opportunity now to build a new agriculture policy for the UK, to be able to increase productivity and become more globally competitive, the skills for the industry has never been more important.

"That's not just for young people. For old and young alike, the NLBC provides that opportunity for us to really look at what skills we will need for the future. It gives me the opportunity now to reengage and continue to upskill, not only myself but my business.

"For me as a farmer this is the first opportunity this industry has had, in effect, to have our own national college."

As CEO of the National Land Based College, Leigh Morris believes farmers have to seize this moment. He said:

"There's never been a better opportunity

for the industry to steer the qualifications they require of their sector. It's a positive perfect storm, following the launch of the government's Post-16 Skills Plan paper, which puts together a technical education plan in everything from agricultural colleges and apprenticeships, and puts employers first in that. We're a big part of that group.

"From the time you begin school and right throughout your career, that whole timeline needs to be joined up more coherently. People in the Industry Skills Group will be able to tell us what skills they want to be involved with – so it can be very sector based. If you are interested in fruit pickers, let us know, if you are interested in high level skills, you can tick that option.

"We'll review applications every month, but we'd be delighted if we had 200-300 farmers involved. This is an opportunity to offer minimal input that will create massive output."

The NLBC aims to encourage land-based industries to work with colleges, universities and training providers to help drive the sector and satisfy its future employment needs. There is no deadline, but the NLBC hopes hear from a variety of voices and sectors within farming. ■

 **Download a form from:**
www.nlbucuk/industry/
or email enquiries@nlbc.uk

 **National Land Based College (UK)**
Championing Skills Development for Land Based Industries

Case study: Founder of DART Ltd, George Case

Why did you get involved?

As a child growing up on a family run mixed farm in west Somerset, I developed an interest in all aspects of farming and was taught the need to use resources efficiently and increase food production. These attributes still ring true today and will have increasing importance with Brexit.

Having spent 40 years working in agricultural education and training, the knowledge gained can be used to formulate the land-based education and training for the next generation of workers.

The Industry Skills Groups can improve knowledge for young and established farmers alike