

PRESS RELEASE

Top Communicator Award For Dunfermline-based Businessman

Dunfermline-based p.r. consultant Ross Muir has won the prestigious Netherthorpe Award as Communicator of the Year for his outstanding service to journalism in the food and farming industries.

The award, the highest presented by the UK's Guild of Agricultural Journalists, recognised his role as press and publicity consultant to Scotland's largest outdoor event the Royal Highland Show and his 25 years at the helm of BBC Scotland television programme Landward.

He received the award from Lord Cameron of Dillington, President of the GAJ, at the Guild's annual meeting in Birmingham. The perpetual Netherthorpe Trophy has its permanent home at the Farmers Club in Whitehall, London.

Educated at Dunfermline High School, Ross Muir studied agriculture in Aberdeen before joining the staff of The Scottish Farmer magazine as a trainee reporter. He then moved to The Scotsman, before joining a features agency in Fleet Street, London. He also had a spell on the farming desk at the Press & Journal in Aberdeen.

In the early 1970s he set up his own public relations consultancy and also started freelance broadcasting with the BBC. He worked on various radio and television programmes and also presented at Grampian and Scottish Television. He was best known, however, as the presenter of the BBC award winning programme Landward which took him filming all over the world.

In 1991, a documentary he presented and scripted about rural life in Papua New Guinea won the One World Broadcasting Trust's award for best regional television programme.

For the last twenty years he has been Press Officer of the Royal Highland Show and also handles media relations and edits the members' magazine The Review for the organisers the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. He has played a pivotal role in the growth of the show which last year attracted an audience of nearly 190,000.

The citation for the Netherthorpe Award said: "Ross Muir is one of Scotland's most respected public relations experts specialising in the food and farming sectors and has been a central force in agri-journalism in newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

"It is a mark of his professionalism that he has frequently been the first point of contact for organisations or companies in the industry either seeking to build a public profile or restore public confidence after national disasters such as BSE and foot and mouth."

Ross Muir merged his company with O'Leary Public Relations in 2005 and the business now trades as O'Leary RM Public Relations based at Comely Park House in Dunfermline. Although the agency has a wide portfolio of non-agric clients, it continues to specialise in the food and farming sector. It was recently appointed to handle p.r. for Hopetoun Farm Shop which is scheduled to open in May.

Ends

Pic shows Ross Muir (right) receiving the Netherthorpe Trophy from Lord Cameron of Dillington.

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