

IFAJ World Congress:

SCOTLAND

The International Federation of Agricultural Journalists World Congress showed the 'Innovations From a Small Island' to 212 journalists from 37 countries.

Photo story by Kasey Brown, associate editor



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1. Unlike in the United States, “A taste of Angus” means food and drink from the city of Angus, instead of a juicy steak.

2. Journalists were given an overview of Scottish agriculture at the beginning of the Congress. Emma Penny, editor of *Farmers Guardian*; James Withers, CEO of Scotland Food and Drink; Daniel Cusick, Scottish Enterprise; and Nigel Miller, president of the National Farmers Union Scotland; explain the challenges and opportunities for Scottish agriculture.

3 & 4. Thainstone Exchange is Europe’s largest farmer-owned livestock auction market. While the chants sounded different than U.S. auctions, animal ages and weights were still given.

5. Mackie’s of Scotland, a family-owned and -operated diverse enterprise, features a low-carbon dairy farm, ice cream production, innovative breeding techniques, Mackie’s Crisps, and a branding success story. The enterprise has a high employee-engagement rate. This wall displays the name of all employees who have been with Mackie’s for 20 years or more.

6. Journalists loved the opportunity to try the 12 current flavors of Mackie’s ice cream, plus a few flavors in development.

7. Mackie’s produces its own honeycomb for its new chocolate line and its ice cream. Mackie’s uses 40,000 kg of honeycomb each year. To ensure quality, they manufacture it themselves. For items that Mackie’s can not produce or manufacture themselves, they source as many Scottish products as possible.

8. Mackie’s new chocolate line adds the enterprise to the 70 Scottish chocolatiers, an industry with an estimated value of £3.8 billion.

9. Low-stress animal handling was a prevalent theme journalists experienced on farms. This was posted prominently in the Mackie’s milking parlor.

10. Mackie’s dairy herd consists of Holstein Friesians crossed with Swedish Reds and Jerseys crossed with Swedish Reds. The herd averages 34 liters of milk with 4% butterfat.

11. Mackie’s has partnered with the Taylor family, potato farmers in Perthshire, to create Mackie’s Potato Crisps. They are made “plough to pack” in Scotland, and are offered in nine flavors. These include the Scottish Specialty varieties like Flamegrilled Aberdeen Angus, Haggis & Cracked Black Pepper, Whisky & Haggis, and Venison & Cranberry.

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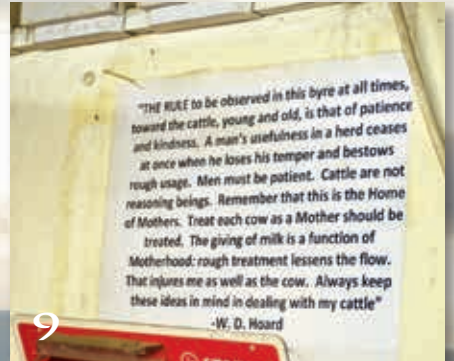
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12. The dairy cows are on an all-voluntary system. Cows have access to feed, water and the milking parlor at all times. The LELY Astronaut A4 robot adjusts to each individual cow, and tells (and tracks) the cow's identity by her eID collar.

13. Calves are housed in group pens at 2 weeks old. They have a computerized feeding robot (lower right) that allows the calves to feed themselves and tracks feed consumption.

14. Alternative energy sources are prevalent in Scotland. Mackie's owns several wind turbines and generates enough energy to power the farm (pictured is the inside of a turbine). They sell their excess energy to a renewable energy supplier. The farm also has several solar panels installed on the farm.

15. The Culquoich Deer Farm, owned by Ali Loder, participates in the Deer Farm and Park Demonstration Project. The project provides information for those interested in deer farming and venison production to learn about farmed and park deer sector.

16. Mains of Tonley, in Tough, Alford, is located on the original home of the Aberdeen Angus breed. It is operated by three generations, (pictured from left) Neil Wattie, Mark Wattie and Neil Wattie Sr.

17, 18 & 19. The Tonley farm began in 1993 and now has 120 purebred-Angus cows. Pedigree improvement has been the goal the last few years, and Neil Wattie says, "It is very attractive to have Angus as a terminal sire."

20. Scottish cattle genetics are marketed mainly through success at shows. Mark Wattie shows journalists the bull named Tonley Pato, after a Brazilian footballer. Mark names all of the bulls after football players.

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21. Continental breeds are still the most popular in Scotland. The purebred Simmental herd at Iain Green's Corskie Farm, in Garmouth, Moray, is home to the highest-priced Simmental in Britain. Green serves as the president of the British Simmental Cattle Society.

22. By total cattle numbers, about 13% of total calf registrations are Simmentals, making it the fourth most popular purebred breed.

23. With the prevalence of whisky distilleries, barley dark grains (a byproduct from distilleries) are used as cattle feed.

24. Glen Garioch (pronounced as Glen Geery in the ancient Doric dialect) is one of the oldest operating distilleries in Scotland. It has been distilling local barley since 1797.

25. Journalists were fed Aberdeen Angus Scotch Beef at the Deeside Activity Park, owned by Angus breeder Ken Howie. Scotch Beef is a Protected Geographical Indication, which protects traditional and regional high-quality food.

26. Journalists were given a scenic ride to the highest point of John Gordon's Wellhead Farm. The 1,350-ft. peak offered amazing panoramic views.

27. Peat is an ingredient in many Scotch whiskeys that gives it a smoky flavor. Glen Garioch does not use peat to be more environmentally conscious, and, as a result, the whisky has a delightful fruity, lighter taste.

28. The barrel in which a whisky is aged greatly affects the final flavor of the whisky.

29. Iain Green demonstrates a drone, which is used on the 3,000-acre barley and wheat farm. Drone use is highly regulated in Scotland like it is in the United States.

30. Glen Garioch is nestled in Oldmeldrum, near Aberdeen. It is the most easterly distillery in Scotland. Glen Garioch is only produced in small batches.

31. Eager journalists were given the opportunity to taste many drams of different whiskeys on the trip, including this Dalmore 15-year single-malt.



