

Cumbrian egg producer wins award for outstanding contribution to animal welfare

In RSPCA Assured's first-ever Pig and Poultry Awards

*****Strictly embargoed until 9 am on Sunday 3 October 2021*****

Roger Gill, agriculture director at The Lakes Free Range Egg Company, has today beaten off stiff competition from 28 nominees to win the 'outstanding contribution to animal welfare' category, in RSPCA Assured's first-ever awards for pig and poultry members.

Every day is a school day for Roger who started his career in dairy farming before moving into poultry. He prides himself on constantly challenging how things are done and how they can be improved.



During his time at Lakes, which has more than 1.8 million birds, Roger has been at the forefront of innovation. David Brass, CEO of Lakes Free Range, explains:

“In his time with us, he has been instrumental in turning scientific research into commercially viable high welfare systems. One example is the ‘Dark Brooding’ system where pullets are much more active and better feathered, whilst reducing rearing mortality by 60% and energy use by 85%.

“Invariably Roger goes that extra mile. He has an insatiable appetite to improve the lives of the birds, treading a fine line between better physical performance, better welfare and economic performance.”

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RSPCA Assured's independent panel of judges was also impressed by Roger's pioneering of the planting of 230 thousand trees on more than 6,000 acres. Many of these trees are now maturing, absorbing Co2 and reducing the Lakes carbon footprint. One of the judges, David Main, professor of production animal health and welfare at the Royal Agricultural University at Cirencester, says:

"I was really impressed by Roger's dedication to coming up with evidence-based innovative ways to help improve the welfare of laying hens. He clearly does his homework in making sure that new things are properly trialled, to ensure they have a positive impact on the lives of hens. His contribution to bird welfare and the RSPCA Assured scheme is clearly outstanding and he very much deserves this award."

Commenting on his win, Roger says:

"I joined Lakes knowing I'd be working with a business that shared my vision to meet high welfare standards and produce sustainably. I'm really proud to be recognised for the work I, together with my colleagues, have done over the years. I've got a great team around me who buy into the central ethos of the business, that welfare is at the heart of everything we do".

The RSPCA Assured awards are designed to recognise and reward pig, broiler, laying hen and turkey members for achievements in four categories:

- **Excellence in higher farm animal welfare** - going above and beyond the standards and/or expectations to help improve farm animal welfare
- **Excellence in the education of farm animal welfare** - being proactive in engaging and educating others about higher farm animal welfare
- **Excellence in sustainability and higher farm animal welfare** - demonstrating consistent dedication to caring for the environment and animals in general through sustainability efforts
- **Outstanding contribution** - to pig and poultry welfare

Originally planned to be announced at the *British Pig and Poultry Trade Fair 2020*, the final winners in the other categories have been announced via the scheme's [website](#) and social media platforms [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)

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RSPCA Assured hopes to extend its awards programme to the rest of its membership in the near future. For more information about the awards, Roger and the other winners and runners up click [here](#).

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