Welcome

It's a pleasure to welcome you to this year's CLA Rural Business Conference.

It has been a year of upheaval and volatility continues to dominate markets, weather and geo-politics. We have a new Prime Minister in Westminster and, for the first time since devolution, a Plaid Cymru-led government in Cardiff. Both are still finding their feet, and both will shape the future of rural business for years to come. Today is a chance to tell them what that future should look like.

Our Inheritance Tax campaign won a significant concession, but the reforms still threaten the future of many family businesses, and we will keep pressing for change. In England, the Sustainable Farming Incentive debacle, with funding exhausted in under six hours, left thousands of farmers without the support they had planned for and badly damaged trust in government. These are not abstract policy failures; they land on kitchen tables across the country at a time when stability is in short supply.

Yet the ambitious rural businesses of the CLA keep finding ways to adapt, diversify and grow. Throughout the day you'll hear from some of them, alongside leading politicians and business figures, on what it will take to tell the full story of the rural economy's potential.

Please get involved in the debate, make new contacts and share your experiences with fellow members. As has been demonstrated over the years, this conference is as much about learning from one another as it is about hearing from those on stage.

Finally, my thanks go to all our partners, whose generous support makes this event possible. Do visit their stands during the breaks.



Gavin Lane
CLA Deputy President

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