

For Immediate Release
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AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO KENT STUDENTS

The Kent County Agricultural Society has awarded scholarships to three Kent based students looking to study agriculture and land-based degrees at university.

The scholarship programme was set up in 2016 to provide up to three students each year with £1000 of funding for their degree level studies in agricultural or land-based courses and to provide a support group as they step into their first year at university. This year's scholarship recipients are Benjamin Read, Toby Dingle, and Hannah Mackenzie.

Although not from a farming background, Benjamin was inspired to follow agriculture as a career after watching lambing whilst on a family holiday at the age of ten. Since then, he has returned to the same farm for work experience each year during the school holidays where he has helped with lambing, calving, milking, dry stone walling and other tasks essential to the running of the farm. Benjamin, who is 18 and from Maidstone, is looking to study agriculture at Harper Adams University. He is particularly interested in sheep farming and is looking forward to his placement year which he hopes to spend in New Zealand.

Toby Dingle, aged 19 from Canterbury, is also looking to study agriculture at Harper Adams University. He is interested in both arable and livestock farming having been a member of Canterbury Young Farmers' Club and looking after his own flock of sheep. Toby often helps on the family farm and has learnt about running a business through a farm diversification project where he helped build a replica First World War trench which is often used for school visits and filming. Toby is hoping to develop a career in farm management after he graduates.

The third recipient of this year's funding is Hannah Mackenzie. 18 years old and from Tenterden, Hannah is looking to study animal therapy at Writtle University College. Hannah has been a part of Homewood School Young Farmers Club for seven years and was recently shortlisted for the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs Under 18 Member of the Year. Her experiences as a young farmer have inspired her to pursue a career in veterinary physiotherapy as she most enjoys caring for livestock.

Show manager, Lucy Hegarty said: "We're thrilled to be running our scholarship programme for a fourth year. One of our first scholars will be graduating this year and we're delighted to be able to continue offering this opportunity to students in Kent looking to study agriculture at a higher level. We always receive a very high standard of application and Benjamin, Toby, and Hannah all stood out for their passion for their chosen subjects. We're looking forward to hearing more from the new cohort of Kent Rural Scholars on their time at university."

The scholarship scheme is part of a larger programme of charitable activities run by the Kent County Agricultural Society. It also provides recognition awards for the county's farming workers and runs the Kent County Show and Living Land events to encourage an interest in agriculture and help promote an understanding of farming and where our food comes from.

Find out more on the Kent County Agricultural Society's work and discover how to support them by visiting www.kentshowground.co.uk.

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Notes to the Editors:

About the Kent County Agricultural Society (Registered Charity Number: 1001191)

The Kent County Agricultural Society has been supporting education and improvement in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and related industries since its foundation in 1923. It provides grants to Kent Young Farmers Clubs and offers university scholarships to students wishing to study in related fields. The Society also provides free education on farming to young children through the 'Farming in the Classroom' initiative and the Living Land event.

The Society's headline event is the Kent County Show; the region's showcase event for farming, countryside, and rural life. The three day show in July brings together the best food, animals, and entertainment that Kent has to offer and reveals the true spirit of "The Garden of England."

Alongside its work in supporting education in agriculture for young children and students, the Society also supports the county's agricultural and land-based industries and workers through recognition awards and its trade show, Farm Expo in March.