

NATALIE MOORE (2023)



I was delighted to be offered a bursary to attend the AHDB AgriLeader Conference 2023 in Stratford upon Avon.

In only its second year there were about 80 people present from all over the UK, half of which it seemed had been last year and had come back for a second time. The aim of the conference was to bring together like-minded people where they could network with each other but also hear from speakers completely unrelated to agriculture for a change.

The first session on Tuesday morning was a panel session. In the afternoon there was a motivational speaker talking about future use of artificial intelligence in the workplace and in the evening there was a drinks reception, a three-course meal and an after-dinner speaker.

Then, on Wednesday morning there was a very interactive session with a psychologist which got people up and about and interacting with each other and left you with completely different ways of thinking about things in your life and in your business.

The highlight of the conference for me was the evening reception. The main course was an exceptional piece of slow cooked beef which

melted in the mouth, and it was an absolute pleasure to be served something that was a complement to British Agriculture for a change!

The after-dinner speaker was England rugby and World Cup winning star Katy Daly-McClean, and the session was set up in an interview format allowing her to give an honest and open view on her life and career. I have absolutely no interest in rugby whatsoever, but she was so easy to relate to; she was a down to earth northern lass who had made it in a male dominated world.

As a child, Katy was the only girl on the rugby pitch at her local club, but she never let this put her off and she just kept going until she made it to the top but as she pointed out although she won the World Cup eventually, they had many occasions when they were runner up and where all their hard work was left unrewarded and it's the mindset that you then have to put on to go and repeat the last four years of hard work to try and lift that trophy the next time round.

The whole conference was about becoming a better leader, changing the way you think, learning to listen to and value the opinions of others around you and ultimately work better as a team.

The conference definitely got you thinking, it was well worth going to and as usual with all these events that Future Farmers fund members to go to, I came away with a few new friends and I would like to thank Future Farmers and the Yorkshire Agricultural Society for the opportunity to go. I would definitely go again.



NICK GRAYSON (2022)



As soon as I saw the line-up of speakers for the AgriLeader Forum I knew I had to go.

Usually, on the journey home from such events you go over the key points in your head

and feel re-energised about your own business for a day or so. Never has an event had me still thinking about the ‘take home messages’ several weeks down the line.

The most refreshing thing was that virtually none of the speakers had any idea about agriculture at all. They were simply the best people possible to speak about leadership and positive mindset. The event had a very strong emphasis on networking, which felt great after the last couple of years!

Usually at these events I would make a beeline for everyone I know and spend the conference with them, but we were allocated seating for the entirety of the event. This allowed me to network, and speak to more people, and I have returned home with a few more friends which I still speak to regularly. The networking continued well into the early hours of day two and we had some fantastic thought-provoking conversations.

A standout moment of the conference for me was at the final session of day one when we heard from Ben Akers, the founder of Talk Club. Talk Club is a talking and listening club for men that hopes to keep you mentally fit by providing a secure and private space to share and support others. I couldn’t quite believe I was sat in a room filled with farmers, listening to someone talk about the importance of men’s mental health.

The point from this session that I still think about today is trying to ask people ‘how are you out of 10?’ rather than the usual ‘how are you’, to try and encourage more communication than the usual ‘fine thanks!’. My friends and I regularly ask each other how they are out of 10 now, it’s been a great tool for us all to use to open up more.

Rebecca Roberts took the first session of day one. Rebecca is a mindset coach and spoke about comparing our own lives to a computer keyboard. She explained that, without the spacebar nothing else on the keyboard makes any sense, and we should live our own lives like this and always ensure we maintain our ‘space bar’. We should create space, and time for ourselves so that we can see things more clearly. This concept struck a chord with me and is something I am making a conscious effort to try and uphold in my own life.

I would go as far as to say that the AHDB AgriLeader forum has been the best conference I have attended and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Future Farmers of Yorkshire for giving me the opportunity to attend.

