



Newsletter

March 2019

Welcome to the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth's latest newsletter. This edition covers news and notes on our most recent activities, including the successful Commonwealth Agriculture Conference held in Edmonton last November. Since then we've been busy engaging with members from around the Commonwealth.

The Trustees have met to review the Conference and hear about future plans. We have also agreed that we need to reinvigorate how we market and communicate the RASC – to our members and more widely. This work is now underway, with additional help from the Secretariat, and we are updating website content and developing our social media presence. More to follow – but any ideas or requests that you have would be much appreciated. In addition, we are keen to feature news from members – so [please get in touch](#) with yours.



Michael Lambert LVO Hon Sec

Finally, our new membership year began in January and renewal information has now been sent to all members. We would be grateful if you could deal with this promptly, and if you have any queries at all please [contact the Secretariat](#) (details below). News of our plans for 2019 and 2020 follows. In the meantime, please keep in touch as we look forward to another busy year.

Thank you for your continued support.

NEWS: 28th Commonwealth Agriculture Conference, Edmonton, Canada



The 2018 conference was hosted by Northlands Agriculture in a very wintry Edmonton, Alberta, during November. Early arrivals enjoyed a pre-conference tour that included visits to beef and dairy farms and the beautiful Jasper National Park. High-tech agriculture was on the itinerary too, including an 11-acre greenhouse used for vegetable production, defying Alberta's short growing season. And the tour was capped off with a trip to a distillery producing Alberta vodka, gin, rum, and whisky – all made with grains from local farms!

The thought-provoking Next Generation and CEO events were well attended and came together in a high energy “particles colliding” session. Feedback from this has been extremely positive with the NG delegates embracing the opportunity to tap into – and at times challenge - the vast experience and knowledge of the CEOs. Led by Nigel Cushion, a leadership coach and mentor from the UK, delegates came away with a real sense of purpose and enthusiasm to continue the dialogue into the future. Read Nigel's feedback report [here](#) and hear from Brittany Hennig, a NG delegate from Canada [here](#).

'Connecting the World through Food' was the 28th conference's main theme – and a stellar cast of speakers brilliantly brought this to life, under our enthusiastic MC, Dianne Finstad. Our President, HRH The Princess Royal [opened the conference](#) and we were welcomed to Canada by the Lt Gov of Alberta, Hon Lois Mitchell. Keynote speaker Robert Saik - the author of 'The Agriculture Manifesto' - set the scene by describing the forces that he believes will drive the future of agriculture with a growing world population and fewer resources. Other speakers included Dr Reinhard Grandke of the DLG in Germany, Jeffery Fitzpatrick-Stillwell of McDonald's Canada and Bud Mercer who spoke vividly about the challenges of planning and conduct of major public events. The closing presentation was given by Greg and Kendal Peterson of Peterson Farm Bros, highlighting how social media can be used to promote and further the understanding of agriculture. See the Petersons in [action here](#). An excellent conference was rounded off with fabulous Canadian food at the Gala dinner and, for some, a visit to Farmfair International, one of Canada's top agricultural shows.



Our thanks go to Laura Gadowsky & all at Northlands Agriculture for an excellent conference – well done!

RASC AGM 2019

This year's **RASC Annual General Meeting** will be held on Monday 10 June 2019 hosted by the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society at their Showground in Trinity on the island of Jersey. All paid-up members and friends of the RASC are welcome to attend. Further information will be circulated in early May.

The AGM also offers the opportunity to visit the Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society's Summer Country Fair, being held the weekend prior to the meeting. Further information can be found on their [website](#).



NEXT GENERATION

The Next Generation group plays a huge role within the RASC and its member societies. Our 'NGs' have grown from strength to strength, networking and sharing information and knowledge across the RASC family.

NGs are all about developing and encouraging the future leaders within the RASC membership through bringing people together with a common interest, to share knowledge, experience and further understanding. It's a great network of like-minded younger people from across the Commonwealth (and beyond).

A key part of the NG agenda includes a biennial 'Understanding & Assistance' mission. The **2019 Understanding & Assistance mission** is set to take us to a corner of the Commonwealth that has not featured as a NG destination before - the Caribbean. An exciting itinerary is being designed to look into the agricultural industry across a number of Caribbean islands to give NG's an insight into this incredibly important tropical part of the Commonwealth.

This year's mission will include a visit to The University of the West Indies which has a world-renowned agriculture department and farm visits to both traditional and ultra-modern commercial units. Participants will also have the chance to visit the associated industries of food, drink and tourism.

The mission is limited to 10 participants, with preference given to new delegates and individuals from developing countries. The total budget including accommodation, food and travel is estimated to be £2,500. If you are interested in joining this year's mission or want further information please contact the RASC NG team at rasncg@outlook.com or through the Secretariat.



Who needs the RASC?

We asked *Greg Smith, CEO of the RNAA* to offer a perspective on what the RASC means to him and how it benefits his organisation: "I've only known about the RASC for a few years personally but its relationship with the RNAA reaches right back to 1957. But from here in Norfolk we might ask why we're involved with 'the voice of agriculture in the Commonwealth'? Put quite simply, I can see several key benefits:

1. The RASC is a unique, agricultural, organisation that reaches around the Commonwealth and beyond. As such, it is a terrific network that brings all together with one aim - supporting agriculture.
2. The RASC also provides development opportunities for our members, including NGs. The Commonwealth Agriculture Conference – and its pre- and post-conference activities is excellent, and I've come away from the two I've now attended with new ideas that have had direct benefit to our association.
3. The RASC provides a 'bridge' to the major Shows and Fairs organisations in the world – and it 'reaches back' to the Commonwealth (and its Secretariat) through which we can exert influence on policies that affect agriculture and food production across the world.
4. And looking to the future, the RASC's Next Generation offers unparalleled experience and opportunity for the young people who'll be leading and shaping agriculture in the future. In addition to making new friends, our NGs have come back inspired and with tangible benefits from the places they've been to.



Agriculture faces many challenges, wherever you are in the world, and I'm a firm believer that our associations and societies can help tackle these, in many and differing ways. To do this together, under the unique umbrella of the RASC, gives us a greater chance of achieving success - for the good of everyone."

Comments? Contribute your thoughts and ideas by [emailing us](mailto:rasncg@outlook.com).

Coming up...the 29th Commonwealth Agriculture Conference 2020

Save the date! The 29th conference will be held in Norwich, Norfolk, UK from 30 June to 11 July 2020.

The RASC was launched in Norfolk in 1957 and the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association are delighted to be hosting the 2020 conference. Plans are advancing including pre-conference visits to Sandringham Estate and the Royal Norfolk Show, as well as trips in to the city of Norwich and further afield to Newmarket and into Suffolk. Delegates will have the choice of accommodation at [Dunston Hall](#), a 4* hotel to the south of Norwich, or at the [University of East Anglia](#) where the conference is being held. The theme of the conference will be based around the challenges affecting the Commonwealth as a whole, and how these relate to agriculture.

Keep an eye on the [RASC website](#) for more information and updates on the conference. Booking will open shortly.

