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THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 15th May 2009

AWARDS FOR HELPING THE FARMING COMMUNITY

The work of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) supporters was recognised at the charity's 149th annual general meeting at Weston on the Green, near Oxford this week (Wednesday 13th May). Presenting the annual awards, RABI president Lord Plumb praised the hundreds of volunteers whose valuable contributions help those in need in the farming community.

He said: "We never forget that RABI could not function without these stalwart supporters who give freely of their time and resources to help those less fortunate in the farming community. These awards are recognition of our gratitude for the support we receive from these often unsung heroes.

"The seven perpetual awards, including a new one – the RABI YFC Cup, recognising the growing support of Young Farmers Club members - are a token of our appreciation for the hard work of all our supporters. Without the dedication and fund raising activities of the voluntary county committees across England and Wales we would not be able to maintain our support of an increasing number of long-term retired and disabled beneficiaries."

Winners of the annual awards for 2008 were:

Dennis Brown Shield (for the organisation or company or club that raises the most money during the year) to **Carrs Milling Ltd**

Carrs Milling Industries have become corporate supporters of RABI over the last year with a large event at the Garden at Eden, which it is planned to hold for the next three years. The company has also supported RABI during Farmhouse Breakfast Week.

Beaufort Shield (to the committee raising the most money by their efforts during the year) to **Warwickshire**

The RABI Warwickshire committee raised a total of £115,665 in 2008.

Sam Taylor Cup (to the person(s) who organised the most innovative "off farm charity" event) to **David Burke**, North Yorkshire

David is current chairman of the North Yorkshire committee and having done a lot of research realised that there was a big market for a Dolls' House Fair. This innovative "off farm" event raised £1,700 and is looking to become an annual event, which is all down to the hard work of David and his wife Betty.

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Bryn Davies Bowl (to the individual, organisation, company or club in Wales who has made the greatest contribution to RABI) to **Pembrokeshire Ladies Committee**

The group formed in late spring 2008 and in a very short time organised two events, one of which was the high profile and lucrative Autumn Ball.

RABI Cup (to the committee or person(s) who have delivered a campaign or activity that has raised the profile and awareness of RABI to a wider audience) to **Alan Read**, Buckinghamshire
Alan joined the Bucks committee in 1982 and became chairman in 1988. He is chief agricultural steward at the Thame Show, been involved with the Bucks Ball and is active on the local parish council. His enthusiasm to inspire people to take part in the London 10K has been a great success and he is a regular member of the team himself.

Hunter Farm Challenge Cup (for the person(s) who organised the most innovative charity event on a farm) to the **Shropshire Committee**

Shropshire's Dearnford Lake Festival of Fine Food, Art & Craft was an excellent event organised by Charles & Jane Bebbington and committee chairman Lloyd Jones. The welly theme added a new dimension to the day and was a good kick-start for Welly Week. Over £2,000 was raised for RABI.

The RABI YFC Cup (for the YFC Club who organised the most innovative charity fundraiser) to **Rearsby YFC**

The girls of Rearsby YFC bravely posed in their underwear and wellies for a Welly Week calendar. Their support and enthusiasm for Welly Week was most appreciated. Along with the calendar they also held a jumble sale and bucket run through Melton Mowbray market all raising funds for RABI.

Trustee Awards

Up to five Trustee Awards can be presented each year to those who, in the opinion of the awards panel and trustees, should receive special recognition. They went to:

Andrew Mason, Suffolk

Andrew has been a keen supporter of RABI over a number of years having run the London Marathon and 10K plus walking the Great Wall of China in 2007. He has set up an annual clay shoot event on behalf of RABI and maintains strong links between Sentry Farms and our charity.

Steve Morris, Worcestershire

Over the years Steve has raised several thousand pounds for RABI by taking part in the Great North Run. His energy and personality help to keep the annual Worcestershire dinner a lively and fun affair.

Bill Westnedge, Surrey

Bill has been on the Surrey committee for many years and became Chairman in 2003. The annual Gala Evening is always a great success largely down to the contacts Bill has built up in the county over the years. Despite being over 80 he is still very active and a tremendous supporter of RABI.

Warwick Milne, Northumberland

Warwick is the backbone of the Cumbria committee and works tirelessly at all the events. He frequently visits beneficiaries, becoming involved in pastoral support. 2008 saw the committee raise £12,000 something they have never done before.

Andrew Duffy, Oxfordshire

Andrew has been Secretary of the Oxfordshire committee since 1988. Despite running a busy NFU Office and family commitments he is a very active RABI supporter. He is heavily involved with the annual clay shoot and Oxford biennial dinner both of which raise considerable sums for RABI.

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Notes for editors

Pictures of the award winners, as a group and individually (with the exception of Andrew Mason and Steve Morris who were unable to attend the AGM) **are available from** **nick.bond@rabi.org.uk or lise.venthen@rabi.org.uk**

Further information and details of RABI activities are available on its website - www.rabi.org.uk or from: Nicholas Bond, RABI Press Officer, 01865 724931 (RABI office), 01789 721311 (home), 07748 927424 (mobile)