

PRESS RELEASE

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Berkshire farmer receives royal recognition

A Berkshire farmer and former Chairman of The Newbury and District Agricultural Society has been presented with an award for services to agriculture by HRH Princess Alexandra. The Award of Honour was presented to Clem Cooper on the opening day of the South of England Show held last week at Ardingly in Sussex.

Every year the award is made to an individual who has given outstanding service to farming, forestry or horticulture in the south. Coincidentally, Mr Cooper's award was presented exactly 100 days before the Royal County of Berkshire Show in the Society's 100th year. Mr Cooper, who has farmed at Manor Farm, Chaddleworth near Newbury, since 1958, has been closely involved with the show throughout his career. During 1962 he won first prize for the Best Farmed Large Farm in the Newbury Show competitions and this started a life long interest in the Show.

He became Newbury Show Chairman in 1968 and served as Chairman of the cattle committee for 26 years. He was one of three Trustees who bought Newbury Showground in 1984 and helped with the development of the site. Over the years Mr Cooper has won the coveted Best Farmed Large Farm six times as well as numerous prizes for corn crops and his dairy herd. A champion of the Ayrshire breed, Clem twice won the King George VI Cup for the best dairy herd at the South of England Show.

Having been a former National Farmers Union Branch Chairman and then delegate for the union's headquarters, in 1981 Clem was asked to help set up a Tenant Farmers Association which he then chaired in the south east for four years. His four sons studied at the Berkshire College of Agriculture and when the youngest son finished his term Clem was invited to become a Governor of the College. Three years ago he was made the first Honorary Governor, a great honour. He is an active fundraiser for the farming charity the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute.

Simon Carter, current Show Chairman of the Newbury and District Agricultural Society said: “Clem has been one of the great figures in the modern history of the show and it is fitting and timely that his work should be recognised in this way in our 100th year and coming 100 days before the show it is a great countdown for us. The award is richly deserved – Clem has made an enormous contribution to the farming community across the area. We hope through the show, as a shop window for our vibrant farming community, to pass on the enthusiasm of people like him to the next generation.”

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