

Record-breaking competitions success for Devon YFC

On 1st –3rd March, Young Farmers' Clubs (YFC's) from across the South West travelled down to Newquay for the annual South West Area Weekend.

From public speaking to performing arts, the weekend involved a variety of competitions that aim to give young farmers skills for life, whilst also giving them the opportunity to be crowned South West Area Champions.

It was a record-breaking weekend for Devon YFC with enormous success across all competitions. They now have a record 102 members progressing through to national finals later this year.

Young Farmers has a long history of public speaking competitions which aim to build the confidence of their members. From ages 10 to 28, there are speaking competitions for all age groups and Devon YFC took the top spot in all four speaking competitions during the weekend.

The Devon YFC Junior Public Speaking team consisted of Ruby McCombe, Daisy Cligg and Lauren Slawson from Culm Valley YFC. They were judged on their speaking ability, as well as their ability to conduct a meeting as a Chairman, Guest Speaker and Vote of Thanks.

The team's Chairman Ruby McCombe says: "I've learnt so much doing the Junior Public Speaking Competition, and my confidence has grown hugely.

"It has been such a valuable experience that has taught me skills I will carry forward for life. I would definitely recommend anyone starting in YFC to give public speaking a go."

Another competition held during the weekend was 'Situations Vacant'. For this competition the competitor goes through a mock job interview, as well as providing a CV for a job of their choice. The aim is to improve members communication, planning, presentation and personal development skills.

This year's Senior Situations Vacant competition was won by Caroline Barr from Ivybridge YFC. She says: "Situations Vacant is a fantastic competition equipping young farmers with key life skills and boosting their employability.

"Competing gave me the confidence to apply and secure my dream role for next year! It is a real honour to represent Devon YFC and I'm looking forward to competing at the national finals this summer."

The performing arts finals were also completed during the weekend, with young farmers turning their hand to acting, singing and dancing.

Honiton and Totnes Young Farmers took the two top spots in the drama competition, with both Haldon and Exe Valley choirs both progressing in the choir competition too. We also saw brilliant disco dance performances from Cruwys Morchard and Cheriton and Tedburn, coming 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Dan Grist, Devon YFC Chairman, adds: "Young Farmers is clearly so much more than just farming! I was so proud to see our members excel in so many competitions during the South West Area weekend.

"The performing arts competitions in particular are the best way to bring

rural young people together and showcase true YFC teamwork and talent. Across the county this year we had a total of 15 drama performances produced over the course of the winter. These competitions are the perfect way to bring members out of their comfort zone and try something new, not forgetting the mental health benefits of working together as a team.

"I'd like to thank all the trainers, producers, judges and supporters that make these competitions possible. Bring on the national finals where we will show the rest of England and Wales how it's done!"

