

Candidate Biographies

Tim Beaver

I want to see NFU Sugar opening up communications further with its farmers to make sure we stay united and achieve the fairest deal with British Sugar. I want to ensure that growers get paid for every last tonne of sugar we produce by accessing the crown tare situation and other areas in the next review. I am strongly against British Sugar growing their own beet as I feel they are using it as tool to keep sugar beet prices lower.

I was newly voted on the board two years ago and committed to represent the active everyday farmer and your concerns, which I will carry on doing if you vote for me. I was given the Red Tractor role in my second year and after negotiations I got the sugar beet charge dropped from our assurance invoices which will stop over £50,000p/a leaving the beet industry.

I am a tenant farmer in south Lincolnshire covering 550ha, growing 60ha beet and third generation beet farmer. Newcastle University 2001, Sugar Industry Programme, BASIS Diploma qualified, Oxford Farming Conference Emerging Leader 2108. In my spare time I write to companies like British Airways asking why they don't use British grown sugar!

John Haynes

I am Farm Manager for MJ & SC Collins, a 1200ha family owned farming business growing cereals, sugar beet and soya beans on the Essex/Herts border. I have been in the position for 6 years having formerly worked for both Farmcare and Velcourt throughout East Anglia. I am BASIS, FACTS and Advanced Cereals qualified and gained my degree in Agriculture with Business Management at Writtle College in 2005. I am also vice chairman of my local NFU branch.

Having grown beet in previous roles, I have introduced an 8500t contract to the business I run today to increase the efficiency and profitability of the farming operation in order to prepare for Brexit whilst ensuring we maintain a sustainable rotation and farming system.

Every year our industry is presented with a range of challenges – be it climate or legislation. It is crucial to be responsive and adaptive to changes in the weather and climate whilst also standing up and defending as well as selling our industry, in which I am immensely proud to work.

I believe that I can bring fresh, practical and commercially sound ideas, opinions and solutions to the board in a time when the industry must embrace change to prosper.

Alison Lawson

Working closely with my family we farm and run a busy agricultural contractor's business covering an area from North Norfolk down to Essex and across to Cambridgeshire. Sheila and I speak to sugar beet growers throughout the year reference their fertiliser spreading.

Today we harvest around 1,500 acres of sugar beet and have a 4000 tonne contract of our own. We grow W Wheat, OSR, and W Barley on our family farm. We have always appreciated the loyalty of our many customers, and the importance of building long term business relationships, some now spanning 3 generations.

I was very lucky to participate in the 2014 / 2015 Sugar Industry Programme after which I joined the BBRO Stake Holder Board. This board helps to focus and prioritise the direction of research

undertaken on behalf of all growers via their levy payment. Since 2015 it has been my privilege to Chair this board and watch a great team develop.

This work has also helped me gain a good understanding of the various challenges lying ahead for sugar beet growers, especially given the potential loss of key active ingredients.

I live with my partner Simon who works as an Agronomist, and my 12-year-old son Joe.

Mat Smith

I farm in Cambridgeshire Fens near Ramsey in partnership with my brother. The farm is 450 acres with some other land rented. Growing both wheat and peas on seed contracts, potatoes for the chipping market and 3500 tonnes of sugar beet for the Wissington factory. The farm is also in Countryside Stewardship.

I studied agriculture at Writtle College from 1996-1998 including time working in Suffolk on sandy soils. I am currently vice chair of my local drainage board.

I was co-opted onto the sugar board in 2014 after taking part in the Sugar Industry Programme, and then elected in 2015. I was vice chair of beet reception 2015 and 2016. This gave me the opportunity to see the challenges growers face through visiting all four factories and forums during the period. I am also currently vice chair of the regional sugar forum which gives growers the opportunity to keep updated and raise any concerns.

I feel the role of the sugar board is even more essential with changes to quotas, Brexit and threats to products such as neonics. The need for a fair price to allow renewal of equipment for growers, contractors and hauliers is essential to keep the industry competitive.