

For Immediate Release

Date August 2008

Title

2008 BALE Award is launched.

The 2008 Best Alternative Land Enterprise (BALE) Award, the region's premier annual farm diversification competition, is open for entries. Ashton Graham Solicitors are once again sponsoring the competition that is organised by the Suffolk Agricultural Association.

The BALE Award offers a top prize of £1000 to be spent on the business. The competition aims to find the best diversification businesses in the region and is open to farmers from Suffolk and adjoining counties Essex, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Competitors may submit any diversification business they are running from the land or buildings on their farm. Businesses are judged on their commercial, creative and practical merits, including their contribution to the local economy.

This year's judges are the SAA's President - Lady Tollemache, Jonathan Long of Ashton Graham, and last year's winner Sally Bendall. The judges will be visiting all entrants on 13 and 14 October and will spend approximately an hour at each enterprise.

The first prize winner will be awarded the Ashton Graham Challenge Cup along with £1,000 to spend on the winning enterprise. Second prize winner will receive £250 and there is also a special category for Best Newcomer, which is open to any first time entry that has been in business for less than three years. Best newcomer also wins £250. There is also a special award for Best Green Practice, the winner receiving £100.

Jonathan Long, Agricultural Partner at Ashton Graham commented, 'Having been involved with the BALE Award since its inception, I have judged many businesses over the years and seen a varied degree of diversification from farmers and landowners. I have always been delighted and inspired by the standard of entries we receive, and last year was no exception when we judged twelve businesses from across the region. It gave myself and the other judges a difficult job deciding who should win. This year we are again hoping to

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receive a variety of entries and I am confident that the BALE Award will give the winners a level of recognition and encouragement, during a time that many in the farming fraternity are having to find new ways of making their businesses more profitable'.

For an entry form please contact the Suffolk Agricultural Association on 01473 707110 or email sue.bennitt@suffolkshow.co.uk. Completed forms must be returned to the office by Monday 15 September. An Awards Presentation and Luncheon will take place in November for all entrants. Competitors must be members of the Suffolk Agricultural Association and be available to meet the judges on either of the two judging days. The competition is open to both new and past entrants.

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For further information please contact Sue Bennitt at the Suffolk Agricultural Association.

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