

The Institution of Agricultural Engineers

Founded 1938 – Incorporated 1960

Contribution to the Land-based Sector Award

Dr David Llewellyn

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Dr David Llewellyn has made a huge contribution to work in the land-based sector – a situation that was recognised when it was announced in the 2022 New Year Honours list that he was to be made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his services to higher education, agriculture, and rural industries. It is therefore very fitting and appropriate that The Institution of Agricultural Engineers confers the award of “Contribution to the land-based sector” to David recognising all he has done for the sector and particularly for agricultural engineering.

David’s education involved gaining qualifications from University College London, Birkbeck University of London, and the University of Bath. He joined Harper Adams in 1998 and in 2009 was appointed Principal and then as Vice-Chancellor when Harper Adams gained University status in 2012.

During the period of David’s leadership, Harper Adams has been very successful and is now widely regarded in the UK as the leading provider of higher education for the land-based sector.

The University has gained multiple national awards and was the highest ranked modern university for six consecutive years in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, in which it was named Modern University of the Year twice, as well as being named runner-up for the UK University of the Year. David has ensured that the University continues to develop to meet the needs of the land-based sector. He helped establish the largest project in the University’s history – The Harper and Keele Veterinary School – the only joint vet school in the UK. Launched in 2020, the school is already delivering opportunities to address national shortages, retention, diversity, and inclusion challenges in the veterinary profession.

Throughout all his time at Harper Adams David was a keen and active supporter of agricultural engineering activities and interests. He had a key role at all stages in the building of the Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre on the campus and has worked very effectively to ensure that good links have been maintained with key organisations including The Institution of Agricultural Engineers, The Agricultural Engineers Association, JCB, The Alamo Group, Claas and The Douglas Bomford Trust. He



became a Fellow of The Institution in 2009. He was instrumental in creating the National Centre for Precision Farming that is operated within the agricultural engineering department on campus. This team has also established the world-leading “Hands Free Hectare” project that won the Queens Anniversary prize for Higher and Further Education in 2017 and the Future Food Award at the BBC’s Food and Farming Awards ceremony in 2018. David promoted engineering elements of the national Agri-Tech Strategy that led to the establishment of The Agriculture Engineering Precision and Innovation – Agri-EPI Centre at Harper Adams that is one of the four national Centres for Agricultural Innovation created from UK’s Strategy for Agricultural Technologies to help provide engineering and precision agriculture solutions for the agri-food industry. Agricultural Engineering graduates from Harper Adams University that have taken up careers in the industry, have established an excellent professional and personal reputation and are now making important contributions in many sectors of the land-based industries.

David is widely respected as a leading figure in agri-food higher education. He has promoted the interests of UK agriculture, at home and abroad, as well as the importance of research and technology in driving innovation and creating a skilled workforce for future sustainability and food security. He was a founding member of the Skills Development Board, which helped create The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture that was launched this year. He has always been keen to support and represent the interests of all small and specialist HE institutions nationally and, in the period leading up to his retirement from Harper Adams University in 2021, he was chair of GuildHE, which is one of the two higher education sector representative bodies.

In summary, Dr David Llewellyn’s immense contribution to activities in the land-based sector via his leadership at Harper Adams University and his broader involvement in higher education for this sector mean that he is among the strongest candidates to have received a “Contribution to the Land-based Sector” award from The Institution of Agricultural Engineers. David retired from Harper Adams University in 2021 and presentation of this award is a fitting tribute to all his contributions and achievements to the sector during his career. We all wish David a very happy retirement.

