

Stockman from Norfolk Free Range awarded 'excellence in higher farm animal welfare'

In RSPCA Assured's first-ever Pig and Poultry Awards

Monday 20 September 2021

Ben Thompsett, from Norfolk Free Range, has today beaten off stiff competition from 15 nominees to win the 'excellence in higher farm animal welfare' category, in RSPCA Assured's first-ever awards for pig and poultry members.

At just 23-years-old, Ben leads a team of six managing an RSPCA Assured outdoor breeding unit with 1,500 sows for Norfolk Free Range. He impressed an independent panel of judges with his unwavering dedication to pig welfare as one of the judges, Dr. Zoe Davies, chief executive of the National Pig Association, explains:

"We were so impressed by Ben. He is a very dedicated young man who is clearly going over and above to ensure the welfare of his pigs. His mortality rates are amazingly low which really demonstrates that dedication.

"The RSPCA Assured awards are a great opportunity to showcase and celebrate pig producers who are going above and beyond in animal welfare, education and sustainability and Ben is very deserving of his award."

Nick Baird, Norfolk Free Range's breeding manager, proudly adds:



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“Ben has been working for us for three years now. He will always go the extra mile and work late for the welfare of the animals. For instance, a batch of gilts left the gilt-rearing unit late one afternoon so they didn’t get to Swaffham until the early evening. Ben stayed back to make sure the gilts were settled into their pens before he went home.

“Nothing is ever too much trouble, he always prioritises the welfare of the pigs. Ben sets a great example to his colleagues, particularly the younger ones who really look up to him, which is why he is so good at training people.”

Commenting on his win, Ben says:

“I am delighted to have won the *excellence in higher animal welfare* award for pigs. I try hard to do the very best for my pigs and make sure they are kept to the highest possible welfare standards. It feels good to be recognised for this.”

The RSPCA Assured awards are designed to recognise and reward pig, broiler, laying hen and turkey members for achievements in four categories:

- **Excellence in higher farm animal welfare** - going above and beyond the standards and/or expectations to help improve farm animal welfare
- **Excellence in the education of farm animal welfare** - being proactive in engaging and educating others about higher farm animal welfare
- **Excellence in sustainability and higher farm animal welfare** - demonstrating consistent dedication to caring for the environment and animals in general through sustainability efforts
- **Outstanding contribution** - to pig and poultry welfare

Originally planned to be announced at the *British Pig and Poultry Trade Fair 2020*, the final winners in the other categories will be announced daily throughout this week via the scheme’s [website](#) and social media platforms [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)

RSPCA Assured hopes to extend its awards programme to the rest of its membership in the near future. For more information about the awards, Ben and the runners-up for the ‘*excellence in higher animal welfare*’ category for pigs click [here](#).

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