



Scottish Council for
Development and Industry

PRESS RELEASE

BLUESHELL MUSSELS WIN AWARD FOR STRENGTH IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

18 September 2009

A Shetland firm developing world-leading cultivation techniques to supply the finest quality mussels to leading restaurants and major supermarkets has received a prestigious prize.

The Highlands and Islands Enterprise Award for Excellence in Research and Innovation was last night presented to Blueshell Mussels, a family business formed in Shetland in 1997. It has since grown into the biggest rope grown mussel producer in the UK and a key member of the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group. The company harvests 1,300 tonnes of mussels annually from its own sites and is currently investing £750,000 to increase production further.

Knowledge of the marine environment's influences on product quality is central to its success. Unique cultivation techniques which allow mussels to feed naturally are being developed. Scottish mussels are set to become the first cultivated seafood to achieve Friends of the Sea and Marine Stewardship Council certification as a sustainable and well-managed resource.

The presentation was made by HSBC's Chief Executive Officer for Scotland, John Rendall, at the Scottish Council for Development and Industry's 10th Highlands and Islands Annual Dinner and Business Excellence Awards, which attracted 350 guests from around the region.

Michael Laurenson, Managing Director, Blueshell Mussels, said:

"I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of Blueshell Mussels. This award gives testimony to the sheer determination and drive of everyone in our team. To be part of a successful company is great, but to be recognised as a torch bearer worthy of this accolade is simply inexpressible. Our business trading is up 60% year on year and I would like to encourage other businesses that even in a recession there are opportunities to grow through expansion and implementation of new procedures."

Anne Murray, Head of Enterprise Solutions, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), said:

"Blueshell Mussels is an exemplar model for businesses in the region. It utilises the advantages of its outstanding natural environment to match modern customer demand and by investing in innovative production techniques it has been able to pursue an ambitious growth strategy. HIE is delighted to be recognising its success through sponsorship of this award."



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The full winners list of winners was:

- Caledonian MacBrayne Award for Excellence in Tourism - Grenitote Travel, North Uist
- Crown Estate Award for Excellence in a Marine Business - The Underwater Centre, Fort William
- Global Energy Award for Excellence in People Development - Alcan Aluminium UK, Fort William
- Gordon & MacPhail Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship - Freda Newton, Owner and Managing Director, Jacobite Cruises, Inverness
- HSBC Award for Excellence in International Business - Lossie Seafoods, Buckie
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise Award for Excellence in Research and Innovation – Blueshell Mussels, Shetland
- SEPA Award for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability - Touchwood Recycling, Uig, Skye
- SCDI Award for Highlands and Islands Young Engineers Club of the Year – Tarbert Academy, Argyll
- SCDI Highlands and Islands Chairman’s Award for Outstanding Business Achievement – Marine Harvest, Fort William

This year’s event was the 10th SCDI Highlands and Islands Annual Dinner and Business Excellence Awards and it was held at The Drumossie Hotel in Inverness. The evening was hosted by Fred MacAulay and after dinner entertainment was provided by Sandi Toksvig.

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