



# The Ringleader

[www.ringleader.co.uk](http://www.ringleader.co.uk) | [bmr@ringleader.co.uk](mailto:bmr@ringleader.co.uk) | 01896 758091

November 2025

## Woodend: restoring rural resilience

It has been almost 20 years since John Seed formed Woodend Farming Partnership with his wife Louise. Today they run the business with their son, Donald, who is the fourth generation farmer to work at Woodend in the Scottish Borders.

The farm covers 190 hectares of crops with 32,000 free-range hens and “far more renewables” than John ever expected to buy!

“Over the years we’ve bolted on the lot,” says John, “including a straw boiler that chews through bales, a 48-year-old wind turbine that’s somehow still spinning, solar panels wherever we could fit them, and now batteries and an Energy Management System to keep the whole circus under control. Some of it’s worked, some of it’s cost me sleepless nights – but all of it has changed how we think about energy and farming.”

The farm itself is in transition with next generation Donald stepping up, while the wider world keeps “throwing muckle spanners in the works” including Covid, bird flu, climate change, shifting tax rules, Trump tariffs, plus a war in Ukraine that rewrote grain and energy markets overnight.



“If that has taught me anything, it’s that resilience and regeneration aren’t just nice words – they’re survival tools,” says John.

Currently, John is looking at the option of doubling down on home-grown protein through the Pulse Pioneers, turning muck into a resource with bokashi composting, and pushing biodiversity and soil health back to the centre of the farm.

“But resilience can’t stop at the farm gate. We need fair markets that reward us for providing public goods and don’t undercut family farms, and policies that join farming, food, energy, and the environment together.”

So, if you think *Renewables, Resilience and Fair Markets* don’t affect your farm and family, then you should be at the BMR AGM on 12 November to hear what John has to say.



## The 38th Annual General Meeting of Borders Machinery Ring Ltd



**Lauderdale Hotel** 1 Edinburgh Road, Lauder TD2 6TW  
**Wednesday 12 November 2025** join us for breakfast at 9am

**Guest Speaker**

**John Seed**  
Woodend Farm, Duns  
“Renewables, Resilience & Fair Markets”

**RSVP** to [bmr@ringleader.co.uk](mailto:bmr@ringleader.co.uk) or call 01896 758091 to book a place and allow for catering

Nominations for new Directors should be sent to the BMR office by post/email before close of business on 7 November 2025.  
Forms available on request from the office.

## Machinery Update: Case IH & JCB

**Case IH** has launched new Optum series tractors available in three models: 360, 390, and 440 aimed at improving year-round productivity and increasing comfort.

The new Optums offer operators faster transport speeds, increased service intervals and fuel autonomy. Integrated precision technology is also available with Technology Package options to suit individual needs, according to Case IH.

"Today's operations need equipment to drive productivity more than ever," said Franz Josef Silber, global product marketing medium horsepower tractors at Case IH. "The Optum gives operators that needed boost in horsepower and performance to complete any on-farm task in every season."



**JCB** has announced two 7m Loadall machines featuring increased lift capacity and break-out force for greater productivity.

The Loadall 546-70 is capable of lifting up to 4.6t and generates greater bucket/fork tear-out force than the current 542-70 but with no increase in overall machine size to preserve easy and confident manoeuvrability within and around buildings.

The 546-70 will be available in three of JCB's performance and equipment packages – AGRI Super with 97kW, AGRI Xtra with 112kW and the top-spec AGRI Pro with 129kW.

The JCB Loadall 555-70 provides even more of a performance boost, lifting 5.5t and will come in AGRI Xtra and AGRI Pro forms.



### Rebate Scheme

If you are looking to purchase a new tractor, baler or combine, remember that our Case IH Rebate Scheme can save you money when buying new machinery.\*

**Make sure that you send a copy of your invoice to the BMR office by 5 December 2025 at the latest.**

*\*excluding ex-demos or ex-hires*

## Ford Vehicle Deals: Pick-up discount scheme extended

If you are looking to upgrade your pick-up then you might want to consider the **Ford Ranger PHEV** especially since HMRC changed the taxation on this type of vehicle earlier this year (see box).

And a hybrid pick-up could save you even more money now as Ford has extended its £1500 discount scheme until the end of 2025.

Ranger PHEV's plug-in hybrid powertrain combines Ford's 2.3-litre EcoBoost petrol engine and 10-speed automatic gearbox with a 75kW electric motor (e-motor) and an 11.8kWh (usable) lithium-ion traction battery. The battery can be charged by plugging into an external power source, as well as by the petrol engine or by capturing energy when coasting.

Available as an exclusive Stormtrak edition as well as Wildtrak and high-specification XLT variants, Ranger PHEV also introduces Pro Power Onboard to the Ranger line-up for the first time –



powering directly from the onboard battery up to 6.9kW of tools and equipment.

The battery takes less than four hours to charge using a single-phase 16A charger, and with a full charge, Ranger PHEV is capable of up to 43km pure-electric driving.

The **Ford Puma Gen E** is the latest member of the company's electric vehicle line-up. A fun-to-drive electric vehicle that offers an evolution of the Puma's distinctive exterior design that has made this compact crossover a hit with customers.

Ford is also supporting customers to Go Electric with a range of initiatives designed to address the key concerns for those who are making the switch to an electric vehicle for the first time including ensuring customers have their home charger installed by the time they take delivery and offering money-saving dynamic charging to complementary support services, to the reassurance of an eight-year/160,000km (100,000 mile) battery warranty.

### Tax changes

In April 2025, HMRC updated its Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) and Capital Allowances (CA) legislation, affecting double cab pick-ups.

HMRC views any pickup with two rows of seats, or an extended cab, as a cargo vehicle.

Any such pickup truck bought new is subject to the same BiK rates as cars which are based on CO2 emissions – a problem as pick-ups have high CO2 emissions.

You can reduce your tax costs by going electric or buying the Ford Ranger PHEV.



# Become a Mentor in 2026

The Pre-Apprenticeship Scheme requires a series of mentors in order to provide placements for young people who are looking to gain experience in the land-based sector. But what is expected of a mentor? And what are the benefits of mentoring?

A mentor needs to be able to provide suitable support



throughout the six months that a pre-apprentice is with them. The mentor does not have to be a manager or company owner; a suitable employee can be assigned for this purpose.

The purpose of a mentor is to provide realistic insight and guidance into the day-to-day business and to offer the opportunity for young people to start a working career within the industry. It should be remembered that many of the entrants will have no agricultural background but they are keen and willing to learn.

The whole process can be considered a learning experience for the mentor as well as for the apprentice. Having an apprentice allows you to think about your own farming practices and to explain your reasoning to someone that may not have come from a farming background.

A good mentor will help encourage key skills as well as developing personal and social skills. Providing work-related information will assist a young worker with their future career choices.

One of the key elements of mentoring is to offer a good practical experience by 'doing and showing'. This method will allow the effective transfer of knowledge from mentor to pre-apprentice, encourage team working and better communication. It is essential that a mentor offers the best scope of duties and tasks available to allow a young person to gain experience in as wide a range of skills as possible.

It is also important to make certain that a pre-apprentice is allowed to take part in business-related events such as field and crop walking and agronomy visits, office activity, visits to markets, veterinary visits and attendance at shows.

## Autumn Report 2025

Over recent months BMR has had positive discussions with Lothian Machinery Ring about a prospective merger. The Board of directors of both BMR and LMR are highly supportive of the development and are pleased to announce the proposed merger.

The merged society would represent 1200 members with a throughput exceeding £11m and operate under the BMR Ltd name led by a unified Board. Overall management would be undertaken at BMR's office in Earlstoun but a presence will be retained in the Lothians area. Members of LMR are being asked to give formal approval to the merger and the outcome is expected to be announced some time after 18 November.

The early completion of harvest and autumn cultivations has meant a great opportunity for members to get up to date with training requirements for their businesses. Demand for many of our courses has been high, so whether you are looking for a refresher or to learn something new, we have an extensive list of courses taking place over the coming winter months.

Straw demand has been fairly quiet since harvest with local yields being better than expected. We have plenty of wheat straw available for sale in big square and 4x4 rounds if any members are looking to top up before winter. Also, remember to give us a call when pricing your fertiliser & lime requirements for the coming season; price variation can be substantial between suppliers at any given time.

We are delighted to be able to pledge continued support to RHET Borders with their bus transport costs. We have been involved with RHET for the last three years and it's fantastic to see that the demand from schools for farm visits continues to increase and the wider engagement with the local secondary schools is very encouraging. Many pupils, even in a rural area like the Borders, no longer have any family connection with agriculture, so it's crucial we try and get as many pupils out onto farms as possible to learn where their food



comes from and the potential career pathways within the industry.

Member use of the BMR website continues to increase. It provides lots of information on how we can help your business with a full list of all our available training courses as well as giving access to quick and easy forms for ordering fuel or submitting worksheets. There is also a Sales & Wants page offering forage, straw and machinery. Please take a closer look at [www.ringleader.co.uk](http://www.ringleader.co.uk).

Our 38th AGM will be held on Wednesday 12 November at 9am at the Lauderdale Hotel, Lauder and will follow a breakfast meeting format which has proved popular over the last few years.

Our speaker is John Seed from Woodend Farm, Duns who has been a pioneer in farm scale renewables over the years, integrating biomass, solar, wind power and now battery storage into the family farming business. With PV and battery technology prices reducing drastically recently, all farm businesses now have a real opportunity to increase resilience and save costs.

Members will also have the chance to get an update on the proposed merger with LMR at the AGM.

We hope to see you there.



## Is it time to start embracing AI?

**L**ove it or hate it, there is no escaping Artificial Intelligence (AI). From washing machines to planning a holiday for your sister, TV adverts are keen to promote the use of AI in almost every facet of our lives. And agriculture is no exception. Whether it's enhancing crop yields or predicting weather patterns AI's impact on agriculture is something that cannot be ignored.

It is estimated that the global population is expected to increase significantly, creating the need for about 70% more food by mid-century. This is a serious challenge, especially when you consider the current resource scarcity and changing climate conditions meaning water management and sustainable land use are critical.

AI can help in a number of ways such as enhancing crop yield and quality, optimising resources, analysing land use and predicting crop diseases through real-time monitoring.

### Crop Disease Detection

AI is already making significant advances in the early detection and diagnosis of crop diseases. It can be used to assess soil health by analysing data from sensors and images including measuring moisture levels, nutrient content and identifying areas that require changes. This can help in customising the fertiliser and irrigation needs for different parts of a field, ensuring that each area receives exactly what it needs for optimal growth, thereby reducing waste and improving the overall yields from crops.

AI-driven automated weed control systems are coming to market which use machine learning and high-resolution cameras to accurately identify weeds among crops. This allows for precise herbicide application, reducing usage by up to 90% compared to traditional methods. Indeed, some of these machines are already in use by early adopters of the technology.

Animal health monitoring of livestock relies on manual observations which can often miss critical health indicators and is an area now embracing sensor-based and advanced image recognition

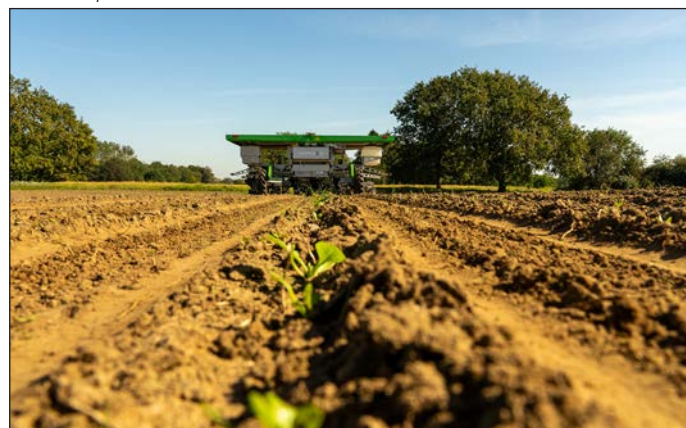
AI systems. One company that has developed such a system is Belfast-based CattleEye ([www.cattleeye.com](http://www.cattleeye.com)) which offers real-time monitoring of livestock behaviour and health, analysing movement and appearance to detect potential health issues promptly.

AI technology will also be key in the precision irrigation systems that are redefining water resource management in agriculture. By integrating information from various data sources, such as soil moisture, climatic conditions, and crop demands, AI algorithms can precisely control the amount of water each plot of land receives, ensuring crops are perfectly hydrated.

There is no doubt that AI is a popular talking point and will continue to be so as we move forward. It is also clear that we face the future challenges of adapting to climate change while trying to feed an ever increasing population and that new technology will play a vital role in enabling us to achieve the necessary strides in efficiency and sustainability that are clearly required.

*FarmDroid FD20 weeding and also fitted with a spot-applcator system*

**Photo:** Opico



### BMR Members' Handbook 2026 Edition

The latest BMR Members' Handbook will be available in February 2026.

To place an advert contact BMR on 01896 758091 for current rates.

**Copy deadline: 28 November**



**BMR will be exhibiting at AgriScot 2025**

**AgriScot**  
The Farm Business Event

**Wednesday 19 November 2025**  
**Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh**

**Come and see us in the Highland Hall**  
**on stand 33 with the Scottish Machinery Rings**

Register for your free ticket at [www.agriscot.co.uk/registration](http://www.agriscot.co.uk/registration)



## Book your Winter training

As we start to enter the Winter period now is a perfect time to take a look ahead and determine what training courses you might need to book for yourself and your staff.

Many BMR courses are delivered at our office in Earlston such as Rodent Management, Emergency First Aid at Work and Pesticides. Other courses are held in suitable locations where adequate facilities can be provided.

But what if you are looking for a course that does not seem to be available because of a lack of a location or there just are not enough people interested in order for BMR to run it?

That is what happened recently to John Davidson of Crosslee Farm who was desperate to find places for his sons on a sheep dipping course. When he called BMR to book the one-day course he discovered that it requires six people in order to run.

John used his local farming group to drum up interest and managed to round up a total of 12 candidates which meant that the course had to run over two

days with part one being held in the BMR office in Earlston while the 'pre-dipping' practical was hosted on John's farm.

The whole process was very much a group effort according to John, which even included collecting the course assessor from the other side of a flood when he was caught out on route to the farm. But it all ended well with everyone passing their NPTC sheep dipping test.

If you have a training course you are keen to be involved in then you might want to follow in John's footsteps and find enough people to join you. But it might be worth speaking to Jill at the BMR office on 01896 758091 first just to find out exactly what you need to do.



### Lantra's Next Generation Practical Training

**Fund** is still available and aims to support those who have started on their agricultural path within the past five years and who are undergoing or have just completed formal sector-related education.

Lantra has said that this five-year rule will only begin after the applicant has turned 18.

The aims of the fund are to encourage more new, and prospective entrants as well as next generation entrants to take up training courses.

More information about the fund can be found on the Lantra Scotland website.

In January 2026 the regulations are changing for the purchase and use of professional rodenticide. So, get rodent ready with BMR's **Lantra Level 2 Rodent Management** training course and exam.

Regulation and Codes of Practice now cover the use of professional anticoagulant rodenticides and the use of metallic phosphides. Any rodent control using professional second generation anticoagulant rodenticides must be carried out by a person with a recognised award in the use of rodenticides.

## Upcoming courses

Telehandler	7 Nov
ATV	11 Nov
Pesticides	13 Nov
Chainsaw	19 Nov
Rodent Management	20 Nov

## Harvest Photo Competition 2025

After one of the driest and quickest harvests that we have experienced in Scotland for a while we thought we would celebrate by awarding prizes for the best photos submitted to the BMR Facebook page earlier this year.

First prize goes to Grant Chambers with his photo of a combine in evening light. Grant wins a free First Aid at Work course.

Highly commended images from James Nisbet and James Bell see them each receive a BMR beanie hat.



The winning photo (left) was by Grant Chambers while James Nisbet (above) and James Bell (below) were highly commended



### OFFICE CLEAR OUT?

If you need to dispose of office documents safely, speak to BMR about our secure, confidential shredding service



**Call: 01896 758091**

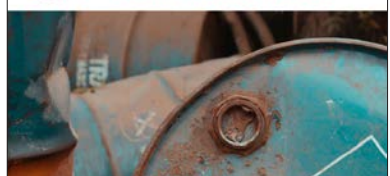


### WASTE OIL?

If you have over 800 litres we can arrange for a free collection  
(Small charge for less than 800 litres)



**Call: 01896 758091**





# Busy time for RHET

Another busy period saw the RHET project coordinator team of Lesley, Ann & Rachel involved at the Royal Highland Show and, as usual, The Discovery Centre was full of amazing activities for children where they welcomed schools from the Borders.

RHET had a presence on various



stands at Border Union Show, Kelso with banners and pop ups but its own stand wasn't on the showground this year: RHET's coordinators are all part-time and allocated a certain number of hours annually so it decided that preparing for shows this year wasn't a priority and used the time to get children onto farms where the learning is real.

At Peebles Show – thanks to its “amazing” volunteers who organise the event and the show organiser who provided the marquee – RHET had a great turnout of supporters helping on the stand with lots of children and families learning about food, farming and countryside ways.

Now it's “back to school” and it has been a busy start to the new year again with 21 visits already arranged onto all types of farms from the Yarrow valley in the west to Duns in the East and two visits into the wool board depot at Selkirk on their open day.

The visits have included a new initiative in partnership with The Tweed Forum and have engaged with

every Advanced Higher Biology and Geography group in Scottish Borders schools. They have been learning about the river, the forestry and the farming at Old Melrose, thanks to some “brilliant” help from The Tweed Forum in delivering these sessions along with some of the many volunteer farmers and the Younger family for hosting.

All of these school visits would most definitely not go ahead without the BMR financial support towards bus costs and the teachers are always extremely grateful for this.

Later this year RHET will run two Autumnal S2 Estate days held in conjunction with Field to Fork, thanks to Lord Home who allows RHET to use the beautiful Hirsell Estate as its venue. There is also a food and farming day planned which will take place at St Boswells market in November and there are nine visits already pencilled in before Christmas.

*If you are interested in becoming a farm host or a classroom speaker please get in touch, it's very rewarding!*  
Lesley Mason – [borders@rhet.org.uk](mailto:borders@rhet.org.uk)



## New Members

**BORDERS HYDRO CLEAN** is a family business operating in the Borders since 2012.

The company provides a professional 24/7 service from jetting works to unblocking most drains including using CCTV surveys. It also offers small drain repairs and power washing of hard surfaces including paths and driveways.

**Contact the BMR office for more information**



## Graf sales success

Graf, one of the fastest-growing suppliers of sustainable water management systems in the UK, recently secured two sales to BMR members.

Huddlestone Farmers took delivery of a One2Clean 5PE Treatment Plant GS50000 with external cabinet for one of its farms in Chirnside. All treatment plants from Graf come with free commissioning.

Graf also supplied a 5000-litre Platin Underground Potable Water Tank to a BMR member in Peebles.

Graf provides a comprehensive range of underground potable water tanks, with capacities reaching up to 52m³ to suit a variety of applications.

## RSABI comedy night

By the time you read this, Perthshire farmer and comedian Jim Smith will have entertained the crowd at Tait Hall, Kelso on his #KeepTalking tour in support of the charity RSABI.

Jim's trademark farming humour makes his shows hugely popular as he continues to spread laughter and encourages connection across rural Scotland, supported by singer Katrina Kennedy.

Farm Stock (Scotland) and Borders Machinery Ring sponsored the event.





## Straw For Sale

4x4 Rounds and Big Square Bales

Call BMR on 01896 758091





## MACHINERY RING BENEFITS!



## RED POWER

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCOTTISH MACHINERY RING MEMBERS

Scottish Machinery Rings are working in partnership with Case IH dealers to provide an exclusive rebate on selected new Case IH tractors, combines and balers purchased by their members.

Simply visit your Case IH dealership and complete the deal. Then, ask your local machinery ring for claim details or visit [www.scottishmachineryrings.co.uk](http://www.scottishmachineryrings.co.uk)



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caseih.com

**CASE IH**

**A.B.L. Agriparts**

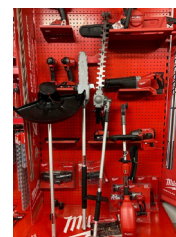
**Kelso Superstore**

**A.B.L. Agriparts**



**Milwaukee Stockist**

6 metres of the most popular items



## SGS Gases - Rent Free Cutting & Welding.

Argon Co2 Mixes for Welding.  
Oxygen & Pro Fuel for Cutting  
10,20 and 30 Litre Bottles  
Initial Deposit Needed.

We keep large stocks of welders and welding consumables  
Compressors, Air Tools & Fittings including Impact Sockets  
Bucket Edges, Rat Poisons, Drainage & Water Fittings.

**Tungsten Wear Parts are a Speciality**

Agriparts Borders Ltd Kelso TD5 8DL - 01573 226 526.

## Plastics Recycling



BMR can offer its members a discounted service for the recycling and processing of farm plastics and cardboard materials. We have suppliers to suit your location.

Make sure you comply with the latest Scottish legislation with a fully auditable paper trail as part of this service.

### Materials that can be Recycled

We aim to give customers a complete agricultural recycling service and accept most farm plastics and cardboards:



- Chemical drums
- Cardboard Packaging
- Fertiliser and seed bags
- Silage wrap
- Net wrap and string
- IBCs
- Woven polyprop floor cover
- Shrink wrap
- Tree guards and shelters
- Polytunnel
- Pallets

Skips can be provided on farm



Liner bags to fit existing standard farm recycling bins can be purchased from the BMR office and can be booked in advance ready for collection

**01896 758091**

**bmr@ringleader.co.uk**

## Lambers Wanted 2026

Are you looking for lambing work?  
Get in touch with your references and availability

Staff required for indoor (day/night) and outdoor lambings



Call BMR:  
**01896 758091**



## Do you need your hedges cut?



BMR has experienced members who can carry out flail and circular saw blade work

Contact the BMR office to discuss your requirements

**01896 758091**



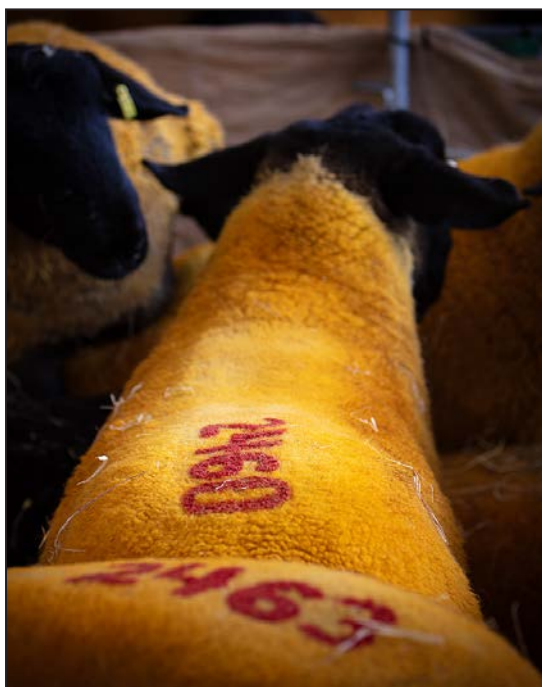


## Thank you, Tup Taxi drivers



BMR would like to thank all those that took part in the Kelso Ram Sales 2025 as Tup Taxi drivers helping to make the event a huge success with almost 3500 tups sold.

Laurence Laing, whose family have traded at the event since as far back as 1937, got proceedings underway, with the traditional ringing of the bell at 10am.



**IN THE FRAME:** Another successful Kelso Ram Sales in 2025 with sales totalling almost £5m

## World Sheepdog Trials in the Borders for 2026

The International Sheep Dog Society has announced that the World Trial allocations for 2026 will be in the Scottish Borders!

Handlers, dogs, and supporters from across the globe are expected to attend this event which will take place from Wednesday 16 to Sunday 20 September 2026 at Huntington Farm, Lauder.

Make a note of the date in your diary and don't miss this chance to see the very best of sheep dog trialling.

**For further information and updates on the World Trial 2026 check out the ISDS website ([www.isds.org.uk](http://www.isds.org.uk)).**



## Winter Supplies



**BMR can supply your rock salt, grit and anti-freeze**

**Remember to top up your heating oil in plenty of time for the festive season**

**Call BMR on 01896 758091**



## Keep Your Info Up To Date

Remember to let us know if you have any new services or machinery that you can offer to other members.

We also need your correct contact details to help us communicate with the right person in your business.

We can also provide your invoices by mail or email – let us know which you prefer.

Contact the office and speak to one of our staff members who will be able to amend your details on our system.

**01896 758091**  
**[bmr@ringleader.co.uk](mailto:bmr@ringleader.co.uk)**



## BMR sitting for charity

The BMR office was treated to a new outdoor table and seating this summer thanks to the Hawick branch of Jewson.

In return for this generous gift we have chosen to donate the cost of the table to some of our favourite agricultural charities that do so much good work for farming families in Scotland.



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