

Britain's favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895



By Michael Barker

Friday 16th October 2020, 16:21 GMT

Copas and Gray named Nuffield scholars



Richard Copas and John Gray

Fresh produce industry figures are named among 2021 recipients of Nuffield Farming Scholarships

Two leading fresh produce industry figures have been announced as among the 2021 cohort of Nuffield Farming Scholars.

The Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust (NFST) revealed its list of 20 scholars this week, who come from across the UK farming and rural industries. They will travel and carry out research as well as seek guidance from industry leaders, experts and pioneers as they undertake their studies.

One of the recipients is Richard Copas, the finance director of his family's farming business in Little Kingshill, Buckinghamshire, which consists of several enterprises, including two Pick Your Own farms. Copas has plans to expand the business by developing a new revenue stream, and he sees potential to tap a consumer demand for UK-grown cherries. A significant cost in fruit production is harvesting

and he would like to explore the option of mechanisation to reduce this cost.

The other fresh produce scholar is John Gray from Carnoustie, Scotland. Gray is managing director of Angus Soft Fruits, which breeds, grows, sources and packs soft fruit for retail. He has plans to expand the business internationally while still ensuring that growers get a fair share of the value chain and is curious to explore why UK farmers and growers take the majority of risk within the supply chain but receive the smallest reward. Key to his study will be understanding how the UK industry can ensure its economic sustainability by maximising their share of the value chain.

"Following an unprecedented and challenging year for UK agriculture, we are pleased to announce our 2021 scholars," said Mike Vacher, Nuffield Farming director. "They have been

carefully selected for both their passion for their chosen topic, and for their potential as future leaders within UK agriculture.

"Our 2021 scholars have selected a range of topics that span the breadth of the industry, including livestock, soft fruits, aquaculture and workforce diversity. A Nuffield scholarship is a life-changing experience, and will no doubt prove invaluable to both scholar businesses and to the industry as a whole.

"On behalf of Nuffield Farming, I wish the 2021 scholars the very best of luck as they prepare to start their studies. We are excited to hear more about the knowledge and experiences you gain over the course of your journeys. In these ever-changing times, what you bring back with you will play a vital role in driving UK agriculture forward."