

Student Bursary Announced at Askham Bryan College

Photo shows left to right, Liz Philip, Principal, Askham Bryan College, Iain McDonell of the Environment Agency, and foundation degree students, Rose Tomson and Will Dickson testing water quality at one of the College ponds.

A £2,000 bursary to help students learn more about protecting and improving the countryside has been announced at Askham Bryan College, near York.

The bursary, awarded by the Environment Agency, is open to students studying for Foundation and Honours degrees in Countryside Management, Agriculture and Sustainable Land Management. As part of their studies, they are invited to submit proposals for their dissertations to the Environment Agency, a number will then be short listed and in April next year four overall winners will be announced. The bursaries are to help with the cost of their project work.

Iain McDonell of the Environment Agency met agriculture and horticulture students at the College to outline the criteria and encourage them to take up the opportunity. He said: "Environmental management is an important aspect of modern farming which can also help to increase profits. Helping the next generation of farmers to develop their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues is our main aim in providing this bursary."

John Wray, section leader of Agriculture at Askham Bryan College commented: "This is a useful opportunity for our students to extend the scope of their dissertations. For example, one requirement is to survey farmers about how, in their day to day work, they are able to help protect and improve the countryside, particularly given the recent environmental legislation. Students will undoubtedly gain a better knowledge of the conservation aspect of farm management. Also, improving communication between farmers and the Environment Agency, through our students, will help improve understanding and knowledge between both parties and ultimately benefit the countryside."

Subjects for their dissertations are likely to include identifying problems in water courses, the use of fertiliser and its impact on the environment and manure management. Students need to demonstrate an understanding of the core values of the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food (SSFF).

Mr McDonell added: "The bursary will help students look at and understand aspects of environmental protection on farms, including the best environmental use of resources and nutrients, climate change issues, waste, and how to deal with the impacts of flooding. The students' work will benefit both the environment and farming communities by examining the impacts that agricultural activities have on the environment, and will help to further relations between the Environment Agency and the next generation of farmers and land managers."