

## Young stars shine on guild course!

**Budding journalists were given a fascinating insight to the career behind the article on the annual Guild of Agricultural Journalists training course.**

The course hosted and sponsored by John Deere and run by the Guild of Agricultural Journalists saw 11 eager writers from across the county meet at the John Deere Headquarters in *Langar (Notts)* for three days of intensive training in every aspect of journalism.

The three days were introduced by Joe Watson, chairman of the guild and current agricultural editor of the *Press and Journal* Scotland's oldest daily newspaper. Joe having flown down from Scotland especially for the occasion.

That evening the students were thrown in at the deep end with an introduction into what to expect from a career in journalism by freelance editorial training consultant David Mascord. David having previously worked on titles such as "*Practical Motorboat*" and "*Pub Caterer*" made it clear to the students the variation a career in journalism can provide.

Having set the tone for the three days Monday morning saw the enthusiastic students ushered by David through the daunting world of reporting news, feature writing and journalism techniques. Students were also given the chance to try their own hands at reporting, something found to be surprisingly challenging.

The day rounded off with an insight into another element of journalism-a look at the work of the P.R agent by Amy Jackson head of communications at the milk development council. The importance of the Press release and the often fraught relationship between the journalist and the P.R agent being fascinating listening.

With so much information to digest the journalists were in need of a good meal, and were dinner guests of John Deere that evening. This gave them a chance to ask questions, and more importantly network- a skill essential to budding journalists looking for that foot in the door.

The morning after saw *Farmers Weekly/Crops* editor Charles Abel going into more detail about the actual practicalities of journalism and what to expect from a career in such a fast paced industry.

The journalists were then treated to a look around the workings behind John Deere's sales force and the much anticipated test drive of John Deere's newest machinery.

Those attending have also been invited on work experience placements around the country, many going to agricultural or botanical magazines, to get that all important hands on experience.

The guild of agricultural journalists has run courses for those looking for a door into the competitive world of journalism, Martin Cox was a previous course attendee and has gone on to write for many publications, and now works as a free lance journalist for a variety of magazines and supplements.

The Course was deemed a great success and hugely enjoyable, Jodie Wallace-Hill described it as “really fantastic and a very enjoyable course”, sentiments that were reflected by course attendee Victoria Lawder “The three days provided a fascinating insight into the world of agricultural journalism”.

Awards for the best article written by the course members will be presented at the Royal show in July.

*William Wilson*