RELU Director wins prestigious international award

Tuesday 29 January, 2013

On 28 January 2013 Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) programme Director Philip Lowe was awarded the Bertebos Prize for his significant contributions to sustainable rural development and land use management.

Professor Philip Lowe has encouraged an interdisciplinary approach towards the achievement of a sustainable rural economy and taken an active role in rural policy development, both in the UK and Europe.

RELU investigates the social, economic, environmental and technological challenges faced by rural areas. The programme is an unprecedented collaboration between the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

The Bertebos Prize is distributed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry every second year for outstanding contributions to the reseach areas of food, agriculture, ecology or animal health. The Prize of 300,000 Swedish krona and a diploma was presented to Professor Philip Lowe by the King of Sweden, Patron of the Academy, in Stockholm.

Professor Philip Lowe said: "It is a great honour to receive this prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, not just for me personally, but also for the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme, whose work is specifically mentioned in the reasons for the award."

He added: "We are facing major challenges today, including environmental change and food security, and tackling these is fundamental to human survival. Working across disciplines, bringing together natural and social sciences, is going to be essential if we are to succeed in addressing them."

ESRC Chief Executive Paul Boyle congratulated Philip saying "Rural areas face many complex problems which require equally multifaceted responses. The programme has been a pathfinder for interdisciplinary research in the UK and beyond and I am delighted that Philip has been recognised for this."

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Notes for editors:

Philip Lowe is Duke of Northumberland Professor of Rural Economy in the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University. Philip was appointed OBE in 2003 for his contribution to the field.

The Rural Economy and Land Use programme is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). RELU has a budget of £24 million, with additional funding provided by the Scottish Government and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. It supports independent high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector. The ESRC's total budget for 2012/13 is £205 million. At any one time the ESRC supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes.

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