18 May 2015 – for immediate release.

**Region’s Young People Set for Rewarding Careers in the Dairy Industry**

More young people in Dumfries and Galloway could have rewarding careers in the dairy industry if they take up the local educational and training opportunities on offer an MSP has said.

Joan McAlpine MSP made the comments after facilitating a meeting at the Barony Campus of SRUC between training providers who will deliver the "certificate of readiness" for youngsters taking the first steps towards employment in agriculture.

Ms McAlpine requested the meeting after local dairy farmers asked for help in speeding up the delivery of local courses, which have been funded by the Scottish Government and have the support of the industry.

 It is hoped that those who complete the Certificate, which is backed by the Scottish Government, will go on to complete a Modern Apprenticeship.

Speaking after her visit the MSP said:

“The dairy industry is hugely important for the economy in Dumfries and Galloway – the rural nature of the region makes it a bastion for the sector and success in farming supports jobs in production as well. The work being done at the Barony and Crichton Farm, which I have seen at first hand, make us a centre of excellence.

Ms Mcalpine said the ‘Certificate of Readiness' was extremely attractive for young people who wanted practical work experience and she was delighted that the SNP government were funding places.

She said:

"The certificate is highly regarded by farmers but it is clear that some innovative thinking was needed to help young people access the course.

“Even accessing transport to take you from your house to class - or to a placement on a farm - can be very difficult.

She added:

“I was very encouraged by my visit to Barony. The staff, and in particular Work Based Learning Co-ordinator Libby Hammond, seemed very keen to try innovative ways of working.

“From rolling start dates, to collaboration with Dumfries and Galloway College and the Crichton, I believe that this course can become an example of best practice for the industry.

“The Scottish Government has a commitment to strengthen and grow the dairy sector and I look forward to working with Libby and her team to make this course a great success.”

If you or a young person you know would be interested in pursuing a career in the dairy industry then please contact Libby Hammond Libby.Hammond@sruc.ac.uk

Contact: Ruth Callander 07917246040