Media Release: 18 September 2021

**THE ETHICAL DAIRY SCOOPS PRESTIGIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

**The Ethical Dairy’s** dedication and drive to tackle environmental change has been recognised by the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards.

A multi-agency judging panel recently selected 35 businesses from across the country to receive prestigious Good Practice Awards and praised their commitment to good environmental practice. From this prestigious list, 12 winners will be shortlisted for an Outstanding Achievement Award on Friday 17 September.

The announcement has come as part of Scotland’s Climate Week 2021, which runs from 13 to 19 September.

Climate Week aims to raise awareness, showcase climate leadership, and encourage action, building momentum ahead of the UN climate negotiations, known as COP26, coming to Glasgow in November.

In the year Glasgow hosts the COP26 climate change conference, this year’s awards also celebrate the actions and achievements of businesses towards reaching net-zero carbon emissions.

Terry A’Hearn, CEO of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and head of the VIBES judging panel said: “In a few weeks time the eyes of the world will be on Scotland as global leaders gather to accelerate the actions required to address the enormous climate challenges we face.

“VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, linked to SEPA’s ambitious ‘One Planet Prosperity’ strategy, recognise Scotland’s leading businesses who show a real commitment to sustainable goods, products and services through leadership, innovation and ambition.

“I would like to congratulate all the finalists who have shown Scotland can be at the forefront of finding sustainable solutions to take on the climate emergency.”

The organisations receiving awards represent a wide range of business sizes, sectors and are from locations across Scotland.

Gillian Bruce VIBES Chair said: “Despite the very significant challenges of the past two years, the high quality of entries has been encouraging.

“It is important that we recognise those who are addressing the urgent environmental issues we face and are setting an example for others.”

A virtual awards ceremony to congratulate the award winners will take place on Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 10.30am.

The event is backed by key economic and business development agencies and leading environmental bodies including The Scottish Government, SEPA, Scottish Enterprise, NatureScot, Scottish Water, Zero Waste Scotland, South of Scotland Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Energy Saving Trust.

The Scottish Government Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work Richard Lochhead, said: “Scotland has always been famous for its innovation and pioneering spirit, and businesses and private sector organisations across the country now have a real opportunity to seize the economic opportunities that our journey to a net-zero economy presents – and indeed are already doing so.

 “As we celebrate Climate Week and highlight the action being taken to tackle climate change, it is fitting that that these organisations are being recognised for the work they are doing to create more sustainable and climate-friendly business practices. My congratulations go to each of the companies highlighted today and I look forward to joining them at this year’s award ceremony”

**Rainton Farm, home of The Ethical Dairy, is an agroecological, organic farm, pioneering cow-with-calf dairy farming. Believed to be the largest cow-with-calf dairy in the world, Rainton’s management system harnesses natural systems for ecological, biodiversity, sustainability and animal welfare gains.**

25 years of soil data suggests Rainton has been carbon negative over that period; sequestering 5 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year. David Finlay, the farmer at The Ethical Dairy, commented:

“We are very pleased to be shortlisted for a VIBES Outstanding Achievement award, particularly this year at a time when agriculture is being rightfully challenged on its environmental track record.

“Our focus is proving that farming can be an important part of the climate solution. Working with nature in grass-based farming systems can help to lock carbon into the soil and build biodiversity, and it’s really important that Scotland recognises the positive environmental impact that pasture-based food production has.

“One of the things we are very keen to highlight is that transitioning to climate-friendly farming isn’t something that happens overnight. We’ve been on this journey for over twenty years now, and I would say it took the first ten years for us to really understand how to properly harness natural systems. There are no quick fixes to environmental change in food systems, but the important thing is that change starts now.

“In the run up to COP26 we are keen to speak with policy makers and politicians to demonstrate that change is possible and to highlight the big opportunity for Scotland to lead the way in climate friendly, nature based farming.”

**ENDS**

The VIBES Scottish Environment Business Awards reward and recognise organisations that have demonstrated significant business benefits from good environmental practice.

In the year that COP26 is coming to Glasgow, the 2021 Awards will also celebrate the actions and achievements of businesses towards reaching net-zero carbon emissions.

Good practice case studies will be prepared for each of the winners and these will be published on the VIBES website.

A virtual awards ceremony to congratulate all of the award winners will take place on Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 10.30am.