

 News

Innovation workshops

SOUTH Bank farmers have been looking at innovation in a series of workshops thought to be the first of their kind in the country.

The four workshops were organised by Peter Sykes and Viv Forbes, farm business advisers at Business Link Humber.

They were delivered by Excalibur UK, a leading innovation training organisation.

The workshops led the participants through thinking about what they do now, their skills and markets onto future developments and idea generation.

Viv said: "Farmers tend to be invited to seminars on CAP reform and other topics specifically for the

farming industry. While these are very important, Peter and I felt farmers should be included in mainstream business events because farmers are fundamentally business men and women.

"We also know that the farming industry has been undergoing huge changes but so many in the industry still look back to the glory days in the hope these times will return."

She added: "We come across a lot of diversification ideas but they all tend to follow the same pattern, we wanted to give farmers the knowledge and power to produce more lateral thinking and come up with diversification ideas that go that extra step and incorporate innovation."



Farmers and invited guests pictured at Slate House Farm, Hibaldstow, for the Farm Innovation Workshop, which was organised by Viv Forbes and Peter Sykes from Business Link Humber.

Peter added: "Innovation does not necessarily mean something completely new, but it is that extra feature or altering some process that gives an edge on the competition. Innovation is the key to standing out from that crowd."

The starting point for the

workshops was looking at the skills and strengths individuals already possess and exploring the opportunities of applying these.

The group generated business ideas in a range of sectors and for better ways of approaching what they already do, and the workshops

gave them the knowledge to keep producing more ideas as markets and opportunities change.

Peter and Viv were delighted with the response and John O'Connor of Excalibur UK said: "This is not your stereotypical view of farmers. They

are a brilliant and dynamic group of business people who are looking for ways of using innovation to improve their businesses and ultimately their standards of living. We believe these workshops give them the opportunity to succeed in this."