

March 2015

LEAF calls on farmers to help educate tomorrow's consumers
Call for farmers to invite schools onto farms for Open Farm School Days 2015

Following the success of Open Farm School Days last year, campaign organiser LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), is encouraging farmers to invite schools onto their farms to enable pupils to gain a better understanding of where their food comes from and the vital work farmers do to manage the countryside.

Open Farm School Days is run by LEAF in partnership with Farming and Countryside Education (FACE), alongside Open Farm Sunday (7th June) – with school visits happening throughout June. Annabel Shackleton, Open Farm School Days manager explains more: “Open Farm School Days provide a great opportunity for farmers to explain to the consumers of tomorrow what farming is all about. The visits educate children about how their food is produced, and gives them the chance to get up close to nature. Free educational resources will be available to farmers hosting visits. This year, we have been working with FACE (Farming And Countryside Education) to deliver a number of free School Farm Visit Workshops*. These half day workshops have brought together farmers interested in hosting school visits offering guidance, ideas and support. We look forward to seeing many of them opening their gates this June to inspire children about farming and how their food is produced.”

Dan Corlett, Chief Executive of FACE highlights why Open Farm School Days is such an important initiative: “It is vital that we all work together to help the next generation learn more about food, farming and the countryside. There is widespread agreement that events such as Open Farm School Days, that enable children to learn in the natural environment and see at first hand where their food comes from, deliver long-term benefits to them and to society.”

LEAF is working in partnership with organisations who already work in this field including FACE, RHET (Royal Highland Education Trust), AHDB, Countryside Learning and The Country Trust.

Open Farm School Days are being run throughout June alongside Open Farm Sunday which is on the 7th June. Open Farm Sunday, which is now in its tenth year, is the farming industry's national open day when hundreds of farms nationwide will be opening their gates to the public.

Registration for Open Farm School Days is now open at http://www.farmsunday.org/ofs12b/about/Open_Farm_School_Days/register.eb LEAF provide free support and resources for farmers who register.

For more information and to register visit: www.farmschooldays.org

Follow @LEAF_OFS on Twitter

Or visit www.visitmyfarm.org/

The final FREE School Farm Visit Workshop:

Co-delivered by LEAF Regional Co-ordinators and FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) will be held in April:

- **Newmarket: Wednesday, 29th April 1.30-4.30pm**, The NFU office, Agriculture House, Willie Snaith Road, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7SN [led by David Jones]

Topics will include planning the visit, contacting schools, through to on farm activity ideas linked to the curriculum.

2006: First Open Farm Sunday took place: 300 farms, 30K visitors

2013: Pilot Open Farm School Days took place: 30 farms, 3K children

2014: 9th Open Farm Sunday: 375 farms, 207K visitors of which 93,150 (45%) were 0-18 years

-Ends-

For further information, images or to speak to an Open Farm School Days host farmer please contact:

David Gough

Open Farm Sunday Press Office

T: [01189 475956](tel:01189475956)

E: openfarmsunday@ceres-pr.co.uk

Editor's note:

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. It works with farmers, the food industry, scientists and consumers to inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities. LEAF has members in 33 countries worldwide. LEAF has organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (Registered charity no: [1045781](#))
- Open Farm School Days run throughout June alongside Open Farm Sunday. They provide thousands of school children with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.
- The tenth annual Open Farm Sunday will take place on 7th June 2015. Open Farm Sunday provides a great opportunity for people to visit a farm to truly get to know how their food is produced and how the countryside around them is cared for.
- For more information about FACE visit <http://www.face-online.org.uk/>
- The FREE School Farm Visit Workshops are being co-delivered by LEAF Regional Co-ordinators and FACE Regional representatives who all have extensive experience hosting and assisting farmers to host school visits.
- Sponsors of Open Farm Sunday and Open Farm School Days 2015 include: **Aldi, Asda, BASF plc, Defra, Farmcare, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, National Farmers Union, Syngenta, The Tesco Eat Happy Project, Waitrose plus the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (from its BPEX, DairyCo, EBLEX, HGCA and HDC divisions).**
- Keep up to date with LEAF's activities via twitter [www.twitter.com/LEAF Farming](http://www.twitter.com/LEAF_Farming) and our regular blogs at leafmarque.wordpress.com.
- LEAF's Vision for Open Farm Sunday:
By 2025 we will have created a platform through Open Farm Sunday and Open Farm School Days that will:
 1. **Create** an opportunity for everybody to have visited a farm
 2. **Educate** everyone about where their food comes from and how it is produced
 3. **Promote** the vital work of farmers in growing our food and enhancing the countryside

4. **Build** an even stronger connection between farmers and consumers
5. **Empower** the whole farming and food industry to engage with their customers
6. **Showcase** the diversity and quality of farming and the skills of the people who work in it
7. **Inform** everybody about the importance of sustainable food production
8. **Nurture** an appreciation of the countryside
9. **Value** the work farmers do and the food they produce
10. **Celebrate** the diversity of the farming industry and all that it produces

Through all this we want everyone to have the chance to...

- Experience the sights, smells and sounds of a farm
- Discover for themselves what farming is all about
- Talk to a farmer and meet the people involved in the story behind their food
- Get up close and personal to nature
- See crops growing at first hand
- Look at the machinery and technology used
- Experience sustainable farming in action