

9th June 2015

Open Farm Sunday – farming shines on record breaking day

This Sunday (7th June) was the tenth anniversary for Open Farm Sunday, and thanks to the support from across the whole farming and food industry, the campaign enjoyed a record breaking day with a quarter of a million visitors! National organisers LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) paid tribute to the hundreds of farmers who opened their gates and thanked all those who helped and supported them.

With the majority of farms basking in sunshine, more visitors than ever before visited a farm for Open Farm Sunday. Nearly 400 farms opened this year and while final figures are still being obtained, LEAF estimates that visitor numbers for 2015 will be over 250,000 - exceeding the record breaking attendance of 2014 by more than 15%.

Annabel Shackleton, Open Farm Sunday manager at LEAF said: “Our tenth Open Farm Sunday has been a resounding success and a fantastic celebration of British farming and food. From the feedback received so far, it’s clear that Open Farm Sunday enabled hundreds of thousands of people to have an amazing day in the countryside, learning about farming and the story behind their food. We’re particularly delighted so many families took the time to visit farms up and down the country, many for the first time. On behalf of LEAF I’d like to offer a huge thank you to everyone involved. Open Farm Sunday 2016 will be on the 5th June, so please put the date in your diary so we can continue to build on the success we have achieved together.”

Sponsors of Open Farm Sunday 2015 include: Aldi, Arla, 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).

Farming Minister George Eustice, who joined LEAF’s Chief Executive Caroline Drummond on a tour of Park Farm, Westerham, said: “I’m delighted to support the Open Farm Sunday event again this year by visiting one of the hundreds of farms across the country opening their gates to

the public. This initiative is a fantastic way of raising awareness of the essential role farming plays in all our lives, helping everyone learn more about where food comes from and inspiring young people to consider a rewarding career in farming.”

Ahead of Open Farm Sunday, the campaign achieved extensive media support, as well as huge engagement on social media. Since the start of May more than 30 mentions of Open Farm Sunday appeared across national print, web and broadcast coverage. Broadcast coverage included: James Martin’s Saturday Kitchen; Chris Evans, Steve Wright and Simon Mayo’s shows on Radio 2; and ITV’s Good Morning Britain and This Morning. Meanwhile, Farming Today interviewed long term supporters of Open Farm Sunday, farmers Sue and Jeremy Padfield, while Radio 4’s The Archers included Open Farm Sunday as a recurring storyline. Print and web coverage included news, features and event listings across: the Daily Mail and Mailonline; The Mirror; Huffington Post; The Sun; Times Weekend and The Sunday Express. In addition, the Telegraph Weekend sent a journalist to one of LEAF’s Information Events held ahead of Open Farm Sunday, leading to a feature entitled: ‘Open Farm Sunday: The day that farmers get to shine.’

The farming and food celebrations continued across social media where the Open Farm Sunday hashtag, #OFS15 was the UK’s third top trending topic on Twitter on Sunday morning. Nearly 1.5m people had seen the hashtag in the month prior to Open Farm Sunday. Over the past seven days the Open Farm Sunday Facebook page reached nearly 150k people. Two new animated videos that were created specifically for the 10 year anniversary of Open Farm Sunday, received more than 17.5k views on YouTube and Facebook.

Here is just a taste of the many tweets and posts across social media about Open Farm Sunday, many of which simply said thank you to the farmers!

“Big thanks to everyone @OpenFarmSunday and to all the farmers for allowing so many families to have such an amazing experience today. #OpenFarmSunday #ofs15”

“Quote of the day from loads of kids @OpenFarmSunday, "How can I get a career in agriculture?" #TheFutureIsBright”

“Had such fun @OpenFarmSunday today - fascinating to hear about the robot milking machines. Such a great day.”

“Farmers, thank you so much for opening your doors to us.”

**“Thanks to @OpenFarmSunday I found open countryside that I didn’t know existed.
#13MileFromHome”**

“Congrats to all #OpenFarmSunday #OFS15 farmers for welcoming consumers and explaining Britain's GREAT farming industry.”

As well as Open Farm Sunday, LEAF also organised Open Farm School Days, where farms are open for school visits throughout June.

Next year’s Open Farm Sunday will take place on the 5th June 2016. For more information visit: www.farmsunday.org or follow [@openfarmsunday](https://twitter.com/openfarmsunday) on Twitter.

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Editor’s note:

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable farming and food. 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 organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (Registered charity no: [1045781](https://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-profile/charity/1045781))
- LEAF Marque is a farm assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. For more information visit www.leafmarque.com

- The tenth annual Open Farm Sunday took 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. Over the past 10 years Open Farm Sunday has achieved so much:
 - 1,000 farmers have hosted events since the first Open Farm Sunday in 2006
 - 1.25million visitors have been to Open Farm Sunday events since 2006
 - Last year 1 out of 5 visitors had never visited a farm before
 - 85% of visitors said that they learnt something new about farming
- Sponsors of Open Farm Sunday 2015 include: **Aldi, Arla, 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).**
- Next year's Open Farm Sunday will take place on 5th June 2016
- Alongside Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host Open Farm School Days which run throughout June. 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. For more information visit www.farmschooldays.org
- Keep up to date with LEAF's activities via twitter www.twitter.com/LEAF_Farming and our regular blogs at leafmarque.wordpress.com.