



LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND FARMING



# LEAF's Open Farm Sunday 2016 Sharing Successes

- 1.8 million visitors since 2006
- 1,500 host farmers since 2006
- 1 in 5 visitors had never visited a farm before





# Open Farm Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Open Farm Sunday is one of the farming industry's biggest success stories. Hundreds of farmers open their gates and share their farming story with visitors of all ages. Managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) since it began in 2006, Open Farm Sunday continues to touch the hearts and minds of thousands of people, building public trust and understanding in farming and food.

For the second year running, more than a quarter of a million people visited farms on Open Farm Sunday 5th June. 382 farmers hosted events all over the UK from Jersey to Orkney, and Northern Ireland to Kent.

2016 was the start of Open Farm Sunday's second decade. To mark this new era, we broadened the reach of Open Farm Sunday to showcase the breadth and diversity of farming and how it impacts on our lives - beyond the production of safe, nutritious food. Under the new theme, 'discover the world of farming', we promoted all that farming delivers, from crops for fuel, clothing, medicine and manufacturing, to the sustainable care and management of the environment.



**Open Farm Sunday 2016**

<b>382</b> host farmers 	<b>261,000</b> people visited farms to discover the world of farming 	<b>22%</b> of visitors had never visited a farm before 	<b>85% ↑</b> Facebook fans 
<b>9,000</b> family, friends and supporters giving up their time to give host farmers a hand	<b>88%</b> of visitors learnt something new 	OFS videos were viewed over <b>20,000</b> times 	<b>15% ↑</b> Twitter impressions #OFS16 was the second largest topic on Twitter on Open Farm Sunday 
<b>1,000</b> pieces media coverage pre OFS including broadcast, print and online			



## In the media and online



Media interest was once again massive with over 1,000 mentions of Open Farm Sunday appearing in the national, print and broadcast media prior to the event. Open Farm Sunday was mentioned on ITV's Good Morning Britain and This Morning, Radio 2's Chris Evans, Steve Wright and Simon Mayo shows and, in a recurring storyline in Radio 4's The Archers. A number of farmers also did local radio and television interviews.

Public engagement online and through social media channels increased, with 29% of visitors finding out about Open Farm Sunday via Facebook.

A series of supporting videos were viewed over 20k times on YouTube, whilst the Open Farm Sunday Facebook page had a reach of 115k in the month prior to Open Farm Sunday. The Open Farm Sunday Twitter also increased its reach with more than 1/2 million impressions from March to June – a 15% increase on the same time period last year. On the day itself, #OFS16 was the second largest trending topic on Twitter.

## Science on the farm

Helping visitors discover the fascinating science and technology behind farming was a key focus for this year's Open Farm Sunday. LEAF worked with the Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council (BBSRC) and other partners to develop new science and technology themed resources and activities. 93 host farmers ordered the Science on the Farm resources, 58% of whom reported that they would not have featured science in farming at their event without these resources. A further 35% said the new resources enhanced the science in farming messages they already promoted on Open Farm Sunday.



## Government endorsement



*"I am delighted to support Open Farm Sunday. This great initiative not only promotes the excellent work done by farmers and producers across the UK but also provides an insight into the highly innovative and enterprising work that modern day farming has become."*

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, visited the Open Farm Sunday event at Cornerways Nursery, Norfolk – the largest glasshouse in the UK producing 140 million tomatoes every year.

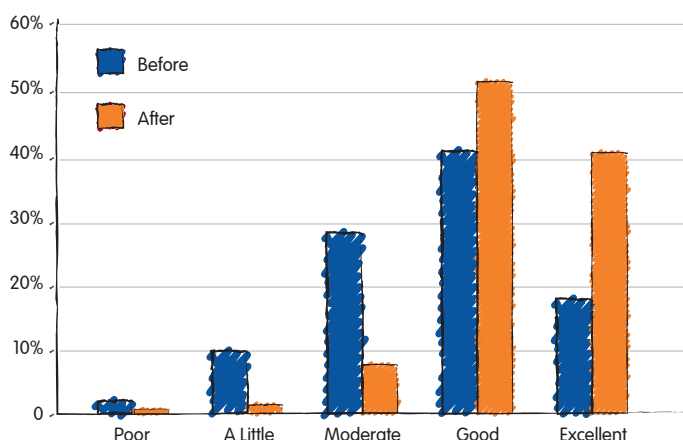
# Our Visitors



Open Farm Sunday helps people to discover more about the fascinating world of farming - not only how their food is grown but about the huge range of goods and services farming delivers and how it impacts on their everyday lives. Visitors told us that their knowledge of the industry had increased as a result of their visit, with 88% saying they had learnt something new about farming. It appeals to a wide range of people, young and old from all types of background. 59% of our visitors were visiting an Open Farm Sunday event for the first time – good to know we are reaching out to new people every year. For one in five visitors, it was their first visit to a farm.



## Knowledge of farmer's role in producing food



"Amazing day, lots to do and learn about. Thank you to our farmers. I totally underestimated what you actually do."

"So thankful for Open Farm Sunday. It has changed my shopping habits."

"Brilliant day to learn and enjoy, eye opening on what really happens in the most positive way."

"An informative, fun, inspiring event that every household should attend."

"Being able to teach our children on farms about their food and where/how it's made is so important to us."

"What a fantastic insight in the local farming community. Plenty of activities for all the family to enjoy."

**52:48**  
rural : urban  
OFS visitors

**59%**  
first time  
OFS visitors

**1st**

# Open Farm School Days

Thousands of schoolchildren from both urban and rural areas also visited farms throughout June as part of LEAF's Open Farm School Days. Some host farmers used the new Science on the Farm resources to explore some of the science and technology behind farming. Farmers and teachers were also encouraged to use the resources available at Countryside Classroom [www.countrysideclassroom.org](http://www.countrysideclassroom.org), of which LEAF is proud to be a founding partner.





## Supporting our host farmers

2016 heralded the launch of our new website which has greatly improved users' on-line experience with a more efficient farmer registration system and event search facility. We took the opportunity to refresh the look and feel of all our resources available to host farmers to help them promote their events and to give away on the day. These included posters, stickers, flyers, polo shirts, gate banners, name badges and activity books.

Free training events were held around the country to provide host farmers with the skills and know how to deliver the best Open Farm Sunday events possible. They enabled new and experienced host farmers to brush up on communication skills, exchange ideas and access all the latest information on how to put on safe, engaging and memorable events.



## Regional support

Our team of eight Open Farm Sunday Regional Co-ordinators provided support to host farmers and helped promote Open Farm Sunday at a local level. LEAF also provided host farmers with a huge amount of guidance and information through the host farmer handbook, e-newsletters, and of course, our new website.



## Sponsor support

Open Farm Sunday could not happen without the financial and in-kind support of our sponsors. They invest a great deal of time and money in helping to promote Open Farm Sunday to their customers and contacts, through their websites, in-store, in their own publications and at events. They also provide host farmers with a huge range of free resources and supporting materials. Many were also out on the day to lend a helping hand to farmers and tell the farming story.



Arla supported 60 of their farm suppliers to host an Open Farm Sunday event



Sainsburys produced a series of 'Orifarm' activity sheets



John Deere contractors got involved with Open Farm Sunday



# Our host farmers

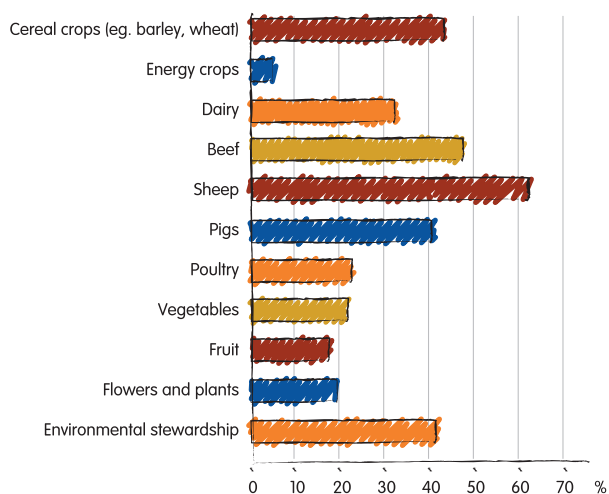
A huge thank you to the 382 farmers who hosted events this year and their 9,000 helpers. Farms of every size, type and location got involved. The majority of events (346) were located in England, with 21 farms opening up in Scotland, 12 in Wales and two in Northern Ireland. It was great to see a 65% increase in the number of events in the North West compared with in 2014. The South East and South West had the highest number of events with both regions seeing 72 farms opening, closely followed by the East of England with 54 events. We also saw a growth in the number of LEAF members taking part (21%) and LEAF Marque certified farms (8%).

Taking part in Open Farm Sunday requires commitment, time and energy! Farmers who get involved, tell us it is hugely rewarding to get closer to their customers and show them what farming is all about. They also say that Open Farm Sunday is a great way to raise the profile of the business and help boost sales. Events ranged from small farm walks, to large open events, with the biggest attracting over 8,000 visitors over the weekend. In particular for the past two years there has been steady growth in visitors attending events in the West Midlands (79% increase) and Yorkshire (56%). On average there were 683 visitors per event.

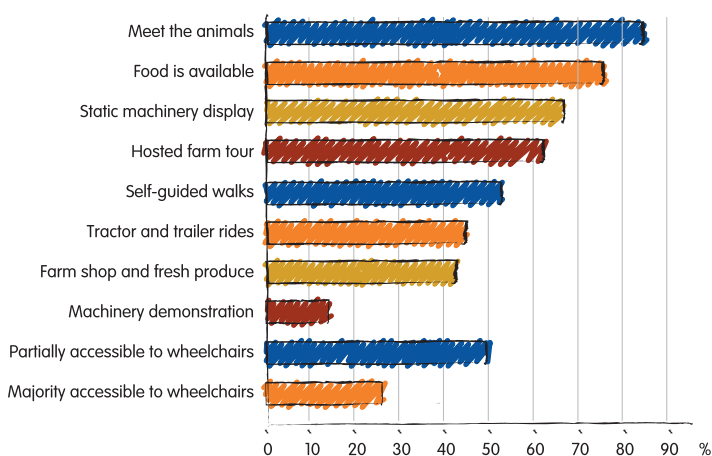
## Number of farms and visitors per region

	Farms	Visitors
South East	72	50,500
South West	71	39,132
East of England	53	54,957
East Midlands	45	33,236
West Midlands	41	23,176
Yorkshire and Humber	24	21,092
North East	7	2,659
North West	33	10,660
Northern Ireland	2	444
Scotland	21	20,758
Wales	12	4,794
Channel Islands	1	550
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>260,958</b>

## Percentage of farms showcasing each industry/feature



## Percentage of farms offering the following activities



# What our host farmers said...



"Wow! As one of the 80 OFS farms that hosted it for the first time, I am 'blown away' by its success in this, LEAF's 25th anniversary year. The reaction from our visitors was fantastic, especially from a severely handicapped girl who seldom gets out and has never been on a farm before. Well worth the effort of getting involved."



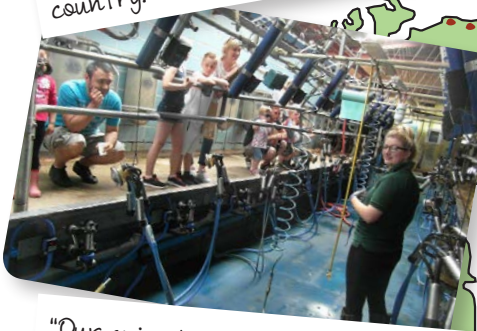
"A real success - great feedback from visitors and enjoyed by all our staff/friends. We will definitely do it again."



"A wonderful way to share our farm and explain the importance of the dairy industry to this country."



"A very satisfying day welcoming people on to the farm and telling them about farm life."



"Our animals love Open Farm Sunday too. They definitely love all the attention, scratches and rubs!"



"Surprised the public at how much technology is involved in farming."



"A wonderful opportunity to welcome people to our farm, connect with them about food production, conservation, biodiversity and the positive and complex impact agriculture has on our communities."



"Fantastic day, great atmosphere, lots of fun. Just a lovely, lovely day!"



## Our sponsors

Open Farm Sunday relies on the support of our generous industry sponsors. A huge thank you to all of them. Their financial and in-kind support enables us to achieve so much together: production of some fantastic free resources; a national media campaign that brings thousands of consumers closer to how their food is produced and the farmers who grow it; an informative and easy to use website that is the hub of all communications; plus all the additional help and support we provide to host farmers to help them to put on memorable events that inspire, engage and inform consumers.



## Get involved

There are lots of ways to get involved:

- Open your farm! Register your event at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org) from 1st November 2016, alternatively encourage and support a neighbouring farmer to open.
- Help promote Open Farm Sunday to other farmers, particularly those who have not got involved before, we are always keen to get more farmers to open.
- Use the resources available in the 'Help Support Promote' section of the website [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org) to promote Open Farm Sunday to your contacts.
- Sponsor Open Farm Sunday - the food and farming industry's national open day that connects thousands of consumers with farmers and the countryside.



## Open Farm Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Open Farm School Days throughout June

Register your events from 1st November 2016

[www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)

Open Farm Sunday is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming).

To find out more about our work and how to support us, please go to [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)

Tel: 02476 413911 Email: [enquiries@leafuk.org](mailto:enquiries@leafuk.org) [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)  
LEAF, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG Registered charity number 1045781