

# Feature

For immediate release  
(905 words)

## New stats reveal 85% of visitors have more trust in British farming

It's been a turbulent year for the British agricultural industry with rising cost of fuel and fertiliser, challenges around labour, unpredictable weather and political changes, many of which are still unknown. The continuous uncertainty is something that cannot be taken lightly, by farmers, by the industry, and by the media.

With the image and perception of British food and farming ever-changing, it is more important than ever that 2023 offers some focus and direction.

Over the last few years, the creativity of digital media has leaped to the forefront of showcasing very best practice in farming and food production, marketing diversifications, and dispelling the latest myths of the moment. In a world where people are digitally exhausted, LEAF Open Farm Sunday (LOFS) has sprung back into the limelight, offering a chance for people to awaken their senses and truly discover the world of farming.

As Caroline Drummond, former Chief Executive of LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), so often said, *"We are uniquely placed as a farming industry to offer something to the public that is a truly 5D experience, touching all of our senses."*

On 12<sup>th</sup> June, over 250 farms opened their gates for LOFS, welcoming over 175,000 people onto farms across Britain to learn, experience, taste, smell, feel, and appreciate great British farming. Farms of all enterprises and sizes took part from crofts and smallholdings, to arable, dairy, horticulture and poultry, and everything in between.

As an industry, inviting the public on farm is an opportunity to stand up and showcase the work farmers do to produce healthy, nutritious and sustainable food whilst also enhancing the environment, the wildlife and all that can be found in the countryside. Doing it as part of LOFS means you get all the support, free resources and top tips from farmers who have been taking part for years.

Its not just about educating the public. The true impact of LOFS is staggering, changing consumer purchasing habits, increasing awareness and trust of British farming, alongside awakening a thirst for more knowledge. LOFS asked visitors what they took away from visiting a farm within a couple of weeks of the event, and again, three months later, and the results are impressive:

### 2022 Immediate impact:

- 85% of visitors have more trust in British farming, having visited a farm
- 79% learned something new about farming and food production
- 72% of visitors told us they feel the industry is doing something to help combat climate change
- Almost half (49%) said it has inspired someone in their group to consider a career in the agri-food sector

*Long term impact:*

- 98% of visitors have a better understanding of what 'sustainably produced' food means
- 96% said they have a greater appreciation for, and are more connected to farming
- 91% told us they are more aware of, and interested in farming issues
- 81% said that as a result of visiting a farm, they are doing things differently: *"I have started using my local farm shop, and trying to buy only British products."*

Reflecting on the significant change since LOFS was launched in 2006, Annabel Shackleton, LEAF Open Farm Sunday Manager highlights the growing trends:

*"We are seeing an increasing number of farmers opening their farm gates at various points in the farming year, from lambing events to pumpkin patches and PYO Christmas trees. The recent pandemic, environmental concerns, and events such as COP26 in Glasgow, have developed a more conscious consumer, who is seeking factually correct information to support their decisions."*

Annabel believes LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2023, taking place on Sunday 11 June, is a safe and supported way for farmers to inform and inspire the public.

*"Long established as the farming industry's annual open day, LOFS offers a huge support network to assist farmers on their journey to welcoming the public on farm. There is a team of LOFS Ambassadors who are on hand and happy to chat through their experiences and offer guidance so each farming business runs the event they feel is manageable and appropriate for their setup."*

*"We also offer a whole host of free resources to help prepare farmers for the event, including guidance for promotion, templates, activity ideas and resources to use on the day itself, to help inform and entertain visitors."*

LOFS is also bringing back free farmer training events for 2023, taking place between February and April. Farmers are invited to come along to network with other like-minded farmers, learn more about the steps involved in opening their farm and pick up ideas from other hosts. Find out more and book your place here: [www.farmsunday.org/open-my-farm/top-tips-and-training](http://www.farmsunday.org/open-my-farm/top-tips-and-training).

Opening your farm to the public does not have to be a huge event for thousands of people. A small farm walk for 30, or an open day for 300 both have a massive, meaningful impact.

As we move into the New Year, the LOFS team are calling on farmers to make a real difference and open their gates in 2023.

*"We would like to pass on our sincere thanks to all of those who played their part in welcoming the public onto a farm, not just for LOFS, but throughout 2022"* added Annabel. *"As a team, we are hugely passionate about building better links with farmers and the public, so together, with a wealth of knowledge about the industry, we can deliver safe and meaningful farm visits."*

Registrations are already open, and the LOFS team would love to hear from you:

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

[-Ends-](#)

#### **Notes to Editor**

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With thanks to our LEAF Open Farm Sunday Principal Sponsors: AHDB, Arla Foods, Asda, BASF, Coop, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, NFU, Sainsburys, Tesco and Waitrose.

**Join in the online conversations:**

**#LOFS23**

Twitter: @OpenFarmSunday

Facebook: @ LEAFOpenFarmSunday

Instagram: @OpenFarmSunday

**Editors' notes:**

- LEAF Open Farm Sunday is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) - the leading organisation delivering and promoting climate positive action, thriving, resilient and exemplar agro-ecological farming at an increasingly global level. Working with farmers, the food industry, scientists, environmentalists, teachers, young people and consumers we are looking at new ways to deliver productivity and prosperity among our farmers, enrich the environment and engage young people and society in a valuable and meaningful way. LEAF set up and has managed LEAF Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006 (LEAF is a registered charity no: 1045781)
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2023 will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Register to host an event at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org).
- Keep up to date with all the LEAF Open Farm Sunday news on Facebook @LEAFOpenFarmSunday, and across Twitter @OpenFarmSunday and Instagram @OpenFarmSunday - use #LOFS23

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