



LEAF OPEN FARM SUNDAY 2019

Media Briefing Notes for Farmers

This document provides information about LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2019, including key facts and information that can be used for any media interviews.

Overview:

The theme for LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2019 is **'Get Closer to Farming'**

LEAF Open Farm Sunday (LOFS) is firmly established as the farming industry's annual open day. Since the first Open Farm Sunday was held in 2006, more than 1,500 farmers across the UK have opened their gates and welcomed 1.8 million people on to their farm for one Sunday each year.

Managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), with support from leading food and farming organisations, the event provides an opportunity for the public to meet farmers and build their knowledge and trust in British farming and food. The evidence shows that Open Farm Sunday is having a really positive impact on raising awareness of farming amongst the general public. A survey of visitors to LEAF Open Farm Sunday events in 2018, 91% of visitors said they appreciated more the work farmers do after visiting a farm; 86% said they felt more connected to the farmers who produced their food, and 78% said they were now more proactively looking to buy British food.

In 2019, our message to the public is to **get closer to farming to find out more about the farming industry and the fabulous work it does.**

British farming is facing significant challenges over the coming months. We know that there are lots of changes ahead but what those changes will be, is not yet clear. So now, more than ever, it is vital that British farmers demonstrate all that they deliver – not just as food producers but as custodians of the countryside and providers of vital ecosystem services including healthy soils, clean water, better air quality, improved biodiversity, higher animal welfare standards and public access. LEAF Open Farm Sunday is the ideal opportunity to explain to people what you do – and why. And importantly how that matters to them! More information can be found at www.farmsunday.org

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LEAF Open Farm Sunday is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) - the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. LEAF 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. There is more information about LEAF later on in this document and at www.leafuk.org.

Possible media questions:

- **Who is LEAF?** *LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is a registered charity and the leading organisation promoting sustainable food and farming. LEAF supports farmers to improve the way they farm by encouraging them to take up Integrated Farm Management (IFM). LEAF also works to help create a better public understanding of farming through its national network of demonstration farms, innovation centres and initiatives like Open Farm Sunday.*
- **What is LEAF Open Farm Sunday?** *LEAF Open Farm Sunday is the farming industry's annual open day.*
- **What can people see on LEAF Open Farm Sunday?** *There will be around 400 events taking place across the country – every event is unique and all types and sizes of farm take part; events range in size from a small farm walk to a full open day.*
- **Why should people visit a farm?** *Visiting a farm is a great way to get closer to farming and learn more about how your food is produced, meet the farmers who produce it and gain a better understanding of the vital role farmers play in managing the countryside and our precious natural resources.*

The following questions may also be asked – if so, please answer as appropriate for your farm and business:

- What is your passion?
- What do you do on a typical day?
- How can people discover the world of farming?
- How can visitors show their support for British farming?
- How do you ensure you are farming sustainably?
- Why is sustainable farming important?
- What do LEAF farmers do for the environment – what practices do you implement on your farm?
- Why did you become a member of LEAF? What are the benefits to the public buying LEAF Marque produce?

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Brexit:

Given the current political situation it is also possible you may be asked about Brexit and its impact on British farmers and farming. LEAF respects that you will have your own personal view on this, and/or the business that employs you. It is therefore up to you to decide how to respond. If you do not want to discuss Brexit and its implications with media, then you can advise the journalist that this is not a topic you wish to discuss. If you work for a business or organisation, we recommend that you seek their advice before responding.

Below is the response LEAF staff members will be using to respond to questions around Brexit:

British farming is facing significant challenges over the coming months. We are in a period of great uncertainty – we know that there are lots of changes ahead but what those changes will be, is not yet clear. So now, more than ever, it is vital that British farmers demonstrate all they deliver – not just as food producers but as custodians of the countryside and providers of vital ecosystem services including healthy soils, clean water, better air quality, improved biodiversity, higher animal welfare standards and public access. LEAF Open Farm Sunday is the ideal opportunity to explain to people what you do – and why. And importantly how that matters to them.

A letter issued by Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive, to the food and farming industry can be found in the appendix to this document.

General Media Interview Guidelines:

- **Take your time** – do not allow the interviewer to rush you.
- **Don't feel you have to answer a question** – if you aren't sure of the answer say you will find out and let them know.
- **Prepare bullet point answers to potential questions** – If you have any queries, contact the LEAF Press Office at Ceres: David, Cat or Jennifer on 01189 475956.
- **Don't stray from the agreed topic** – keep focused on Open Farm Sunday! If the interviewer asks for comment on other issues, such as Brexit, try and steer it back to LOFS and say that 'farmers have a very varied job and have to face a number of challenges. Visiting a farm on LOFS is a great opportunity to hear first-hand from farmers.
- **Nothing is 'off record'** - when you are speaking to a journalist, do not say anything that you are not expecting to end up in print, on film, radio or TV.
- **Keep your answers short and simple**
- **Silence is golden** – avoid the temptation to keep talking to fill a gap. Once you have given an answer wait for the journalist to follow it up.

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Key messages for Open Farm Sunday 2019

Farmers:

The following are the key messages we would like to communicate to other farmers to encourage them to open for LEAF Open Farm Sunday:

- Open your gates on LEAF Open Farm Sunday and show people what farmers deliver and why the public should support British Farming
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday is the farming industry's annual open day and a great opportunity to tell people what farmers do (the crops you grow and food you produce; the land and natural resources you manage; your contribution to the local community and the contribution the industry makes to the UK economy. At a time when we are facing many uncertainties, it is vital that farmers engage with the public)
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday has a real positive impact in helping the public understand the value of British farming and all that it delivers
- It makes good business sense to open your gate on the 9th June. Showing people across the UK what our industry achieves and why British farming matters is so important. This is going to be increasingly important if we leave the EU – British farming will need the full support of the public.
- On Open Farm Sunday you can explain how you care for our valuable natural resources like water, soil and energy and manage the countryside and the habitats that are so vital to wildlife
- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming

The Public:

- **Get Closer to Farming** on LEAF Open Farm Sunday
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday, is a fun and informative day out for the whole family
- Farming is diverse and vital to all our futures
- Farmers produce food and fuel, as well as products for construction, clothing, medicine and packaging
- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming
- Visit a farm on LEAF Open Farm Sunday and **Get Closer to Farming**
Visit www.farmsunday.org to find your nearest participating farm and find out more about the work farmers do.
- You can also find Open Farm Sunday on Facebook www.facebook.com/LEAFOpenFarmSunday and Twitter www.twitter.com/OpenFarmSunday

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Further resources:

For further support and resources about communicating effectively with the **public**, please refer to the [LEAF Speak Out LEAF Toolkit](#)

Health and Safety:

LEAF works closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to ensure the information and support we are providing to host farmers are in line with HSE guidelines.

The industry Code of Practice regarding preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at events on farms has been produced with input from LEAF, along with other rural and farm attraction organisations. All information regarding Health and Safety is available on our website www.farmsunday.org.

If you receive any questions on Health and Safety please refer the journalist to Annabel Shackleton at LEAF on 024 7641 3911 or the LEAF Open Farm Sunday Press Office on 01189 475 956.

LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2019 Principal Sponsors

AHDB, Arla, Asda, BASF, Coop, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, M&S, NFU, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.



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Appendix: Chief Executive Caroline Drummond MBE's open letter encouraging farmers to open for LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2019

Sir,

Public Money for Public Goods - time to take the lead

Government support for farming after Brexit is going to be very different. A key plank of future Government policy will see an end to direct payments by 2027 and replaced by the Environmental Land Management System (ELMS) with farmers receiving **public money based on the provision of public goods.**

Naturally, this means it will be more important than ever for farmers to communicate and connect **more with the public about all they deliver.** Not just as food producers but as custodians of the countryside and providers of vital ecosystem services including healthy soils, clean water, better air quality, improved biodiversity, higher animal welfare standards and public access.

These changes offer huge opportunities for the farming sector as well as the wealth and wellbeing of the nation. It will mean we can further our substantial economic, social and environmental contribution, and, with that strengthen the UK's contribution and capability to feed itself and the world.

As farmers, committed to more sustainable farming, you are in a very strong position to take the lead in reaching out to the public and showcasing all that British Agriculture delivers. Providing opportunities for everyone to get closer to farming will help to build trust and understanding so that consumers really value their UK farming industry.

We are urging farmers to get involved in this year's [LEAF Open Farm Sunday](#) on the 9th June. Whether you choose to offer a farm walk for six people or put on a larger open event for 600, every event offers an opportunity to raise public awareness and understanding of farming and why it matters.

Our British farming industry produces high-quality and delicious food, has world-leading animal welfare standards, contributes to the rural economy and manages our stunning countryside. Please get involved in this year's [LEAF Open Farm Sunday](#) one of the biggest events in the farming calendar. **Let us stand together and proudly demonstrate all that our productive, profitable and progressive food and farming sector delivers.**

Thank you for your support. For more information and to register to take part, please go to www.farmsunday.org.

With best wishes,

Caroline Drummond

LEAF Chief Executive MBE

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