

LEAF OPEN FARM SUNDAY
PRESS RELEASE
Announcing dates and plans
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LEAF Open Farm Sunday announces plans for 2021

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), organisers of the farming industry's annual open day, LEAF Open Farm Sunday (LOFS), has today announced a year-round programme of public engagement to support this flagship event.

In addition to LOFS on-farm events on the 13th June 2021, which have seen over a quarter of a million people visit farms across the UK each year, LEAF will also be hosting a series of 'virtual' farm visits online. Following last year's success, when LOFS took to our screens for the first time, two 'online' farm open days will take place this Spring and Autumn, alongside a programme of monthly live broadcasts running throughout the year.

"One of the unexpected positives to emerge from the challenges of 'lockdown' has been the surge in interest in the countryside, nature and buying fresh produce, and we have seen a higher following than ever on our LOFS digital channels," said LOFS Manager Ms Shackleton. *"This is the perfect moment to capture the public's curiosity and build our outreach to benefit the whole industry."*

While awaiting clarity on Covid regulations on public gatherings and events, LOFS Manager, Annabel Shackleton, is urging farmers to start thinking about how they can host visitors on-farm in June, which will be the 15th anniversary LEAF Open Farm Sunday:

"As visitor numbers for events may be limited, we would love to see a greater number of farms opening their gates but for smaller groups, so that social distancing can be followed. We're encouraging host farmers to think about how to maximise outdoor spaces: it could be a farm walk, a scavenger hunt or a short show-and-tell in the yard. It may also be an opportunity to collaborate with other food producers to provide a place for people to buy and try new local foods."

"Farmers have some important topical messages to share about quality food production, caring for the countryside, plus the economic and environmental benefits of buying British – and we want to help facilitate these conversations."

The library of free LOFS resources and online workshops planned for March will help to make hosting easier and facilitate ideas sharing between the network of experienced and new hosts. Plus, a free, easy-to-use ticketing service is available so host farmers can manage visitor numbers and contact visitors if there are any changes in plans, said Mrs Shackleton:

"While not essential, this is a good year for host farmers to use the ticketing service so they can keep in contact with visitors if plans need to change, but equally to set expectations and encourage them to adhere to farm and Covid-safe regulations. It also allows hosts to limit visitors per hour or per day to help them to manage their event more easily."

The series of virtual farm visits online is designed to extend the opportunities for more people to connect with farming throughout the year and for more farmers to participate.

Two LEAF Online Farm Sunday events, on Sunday 28th March and Sunday 26th September, will each include an afternoon of live virtual farm tours on Facebook @LEAFOpenFarmSunday, featuring a range of different farms spanning the country and shining a spotlight on all farming sectors.

In addition, monthly farm visits broadcast live on Facebook will feature a different farm on the first Sunday of each month, starting on 7th February, adding to the kaleidoscope of farming stories shared with the public.

All these activities will promote a greater understanding of the different aspects of agriculture such as productive soils, animal welfare, clean water and air, public access and enhancing biodiversity.

These on-farm and online events are at the heart of the new LEAF Open Farm Sunday three-year strategy to ensure a continued positive impact on the whole farming industry and enriching the understanding of wider society to act as global citizens supporting climate positive farming and food production.

The main social media channels used across the campaign will be Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and LOFS is asking farmers to post and share on these days using the hashtag #LOFS21 to create a diverse, colourful and authentic picture of UK farming for the public.

To find out more and to register to host LEAF Open Farm Sunday in June 2021, see www.farmsunday.org.

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For further information and images please contact Susannah Pate or Rebecca Dawes at Jane Craigie Marketing on: susannah@janecraigie.com 07841 194 897 or rebecca@janecraigie.com or 07792 467730

BOX: LOFS Social media

Facebook: @LEAFOpenFarmSunday

Twitter: @OpenFarmSunday

Instagram: @OpenFarmSunday

BOX: Summary of LOFS21 activities

- **LEAF Open Farm Sunday, 13th June 2021** – *fifteenth anniversary LOFS*. Farmers across the British Isles are encouraged to open their farm gates, follow social distancing regulations, and welcome visitors onto farms to find out about the world of farming.
- **LEAF Online Farm Sunday, 28th March 2021 & 26th September 2021** – two Sundays packed with virtual farm tours, videos, photos and farming stories broadcast across social media to give the public an insight into different farm enterprises - all in a day!
- **1st Sunday of each month, more virtual farm visits** – broadcast live on LOFS Facebook, featuring a different farmer each month throughout the year.

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 2021 will take place on 13th June 2021. If there are tighter restrictions due to Covid, another digital day of virtual farm tours will be organised. Register to host an event at www.farmsunday.org.
- LEAF Online Farm Sunday virtual farm tours will take place on Sunday 28th March and 26th September, live on Facebook @LEAFOpenFarmSunday, and across Twitter @OpenFarmSunday and Instagram @OpenFarmSunday
- Sponsors of LEAF Open Farm Sunday include: AHDB, Arla Foods, Asda, BASF, Co-op, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, NFU, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.