



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Open gates, open minds – share your story your way**

The organisers of Open Farm Sunday (OFS), LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) are encouraging more farmers to enjoy the multiple benefits that come from showcasing British farming by hosting an event in June this year.

Open Farm Sunday Manager, Annabel Shackleton, offers words of support to anyone considering hosting an event on 9th June 2024:

“There’s a huge opportunity to engage with an eager audience - people are genuinely curious to see behind the farm gate.

“Whatever the size of your event, you’ll be making a significant contribution to people’s understanding of farming and food production. By putting their stories centre stage, farmers are the true heroes of the day,” she says.

LEAF research highlights the value to farmers of having positive conversations, feeling heard and appreciated by the public. For 88% of farmers the main reason they take part in OFS is to promote a positive image of the industry. After attending an event, an overwhelming 96% of visitors say they leave with a greater appreciation of the work farmers do.

To support the delivery of events this year, prospective hosts can join Open Farm Sunday’s online Zoom meetings running until 22nd May, look through the OFS Information Pack on the website [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org), or contact the OFS team to talk through event ideas and get questions answered: 02476413911, [OpenFarmSunday@leaf.eco](mailto:OpenFarmSunday@leaf.eco)

Farms across Britain, from Jersey to Shetland, take part in Open Farm Sunday and welcome visitors onto their farm, opening their mind to the world of farming. Here a selection of farmers share their top tips and experience:

**SCOTLAND:** Kasi McReddie, Ernespie Farm in Castle Douglas: “An Open Farm Sunday event doesn’t need to be a grand scale, it can be just as fantastic with 20 people coming from the local church group or school. It doesn’t even need to take place on a Sunday, it could be as simple as hosting a farm walk one evening. The most important thing is making the event work for you. It’s something you can really build your confidence with and grow on your own terms over time.”

**SOUTH EAST:** Emma Loder-Symonds, Nonington Farms in Kent: “There are a huge number of benefits from hosting. For me one of the best things has been attracting new entrants into the industry. Share your farm. Just go and do it and you’ll be amazed at what happens as a result.”

**SOUTH EAST:** John Whitby, Rowley Farm in Colne Valley: “I didn’t realise just how much fun hosting Open Farm Sunday would be. We get so much out of it. A small event for ten people is equally valid. My advice is, give it a go, don’t be shy!”

**EAST:** Zoe Fletcher from Buckminster Farms, Nr Grantham, Lincolnshire: “It’s really important for farmers to share their stories with the public. To squash preconceptions about the industry, help people to become more conscious consumers and the realistic lifestyle that farmers lead.”

**MIDLANDS:** Louis Phipps from Bragborough Hall, Northamptonshire: “It’s really important for farmers to share their stories with the public. To show how much work goes into producing food, how much care we’re taking of the environment, to recreate a connection of where food comes from so people understand what they’re spending their money on and what they’re putting into their bodies.”

**WALES:** Anna Sutton from Parc Grace Dieu in Monmouthshire: “I was a bit nervous about the rules we’d need to adhere to when opening our farm to the public, but the resources, materials and support from the Open Farm Sunday team is exceptional.”

**SOUTH WEST:** Lisa Allen from Elm Tree Farm near Bristol: “People are genuinely interested in farming and are keen for their children to have connections with nature and with where their food comes from. Agriculture as an industry can seem very closed and hard to understand for the public and is often only in the news when something goes wrong or there is controversy. OFS gives farmers the

chance to share their work and their land with their community, to bust some of the myths and create lasting change in attitudes and beliefs among the public.”

**NORTH EAST:** David Peach of Rock House Farm Partnership in Bedale, Yorkshire; “We hosted our first Open Farm Sunday in 2017 for 40 people. Over the year’s its grown to 250 people. My advice is start small and get lots of help. It frees you up to mingle and talk to people, it’s hard work but very rewarding.”

Celebrating its 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer, Open Farm Sunday is focused on encouraging more farmers to open their gates and put farming centre stage. Visit the [OFS website](#) to register and access an extensive range of free resources.

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#### NOTES TO EDITOR

- **For further information**, please contact the Open Farm Sunday Press Office at Pinstone:  
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- **Keep up to date with all the Open Farm Sunday news and join in the online conversations using #OFS24:**
  - X (Twitter): @OpenFarmSunday
  - Facebook: @LEAFOpenFarmSunday
  - Instagram: @OpenFarmSunday
- Open Farm Sunday is managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) – the charity that promotes and supports more sustainable farming to create a resilient food and farming system for future generations. LEAF is a registered charity no: 1045781 [www.leaf.eco](http://www.leaf.eco)
- This year Open Farm Sunday comes of age – 18 years in the making and open to all! The OFS team at LEAF are ready to support farmers across Britain to take part to make Open Farm Sunday 2024 the best ever! [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)
- With thanks to our Open Farm Sunday principal sponsors: AHDB, Arla Foods, Asda, BASF, Coop, Defra, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, M&S, McDonald’s, NFU, Sainsbury’s, Tesco, and Waitrose.
- Open Farm Sunday 2024 will take place on 9th June 2024.  
Register to host an event at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)

- To contact the Open Farm Sunday team direct:

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