



PRESS RELEASE

9/7/24

Increased public engagement secures greater turn out for Open Farm Sunday

Open Farm Sunday 2024, managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), has set a new benchmark with an impressive surge in media reach and number of visitors attending this year's event.

Marking its 18th anniversary, Open Farm Sunday, held on 9th June 2024 welcomed over 180,000 visitors to 241 events across the UK, surpassing last year's visitor numbers by 9,100.

David Webster, LEAF Chief Executive, says: "Open Farm Sunday is always such a positive and celebratory moment in the farming calendar and this year we were substantially helped by a rare day of glorious summer weather. It was fantastic to see such strong public support on the day with thousands of people travelling to visit farms across the UK. I attended two fantastically well-run events at Hall Hunter Tuesley Farm in Surrey and the Waddesdon Estate in Buckinghamshire, both of which were packed with visitors having a wonderful time.

"On behalf of everyone at LEAF I extend our sincere thanks to all those who took the time to open their gates or support Open Farm Sunday farm events to showcase the crucial role of farmers as food producers and custodians of the land.

"Promoting how farmers are farming with nature and connecting the public with the origins of their food is of vital importance to engage the public constructively around farmers as custodians of the land. The increase in visitor numbers to Open Farm Sunday events and uplift in consumer media engagement this year underscores the public's genuine interest in sustainable farming and desire to form deeper connections with farm businesses in their local community. It really is such a positive day for everyone involved."

Each year, LEAF conducts a survey of farmer hosts following the open day. The top three reasons why farm businesses took part in Open Farm Sunday remain the same, with farmers keen to promote a positive image of the farming industry (88%), to improve community relations (80%) and to inform the public about sustainable farming practices (75%).

“This shows how the relevance of the campaign has stood the test of time and the enthusiasm for it continues to thrive and grow as we enter our 19th year. The reach and impact of our campaign for farmers and the public is something we work hard to promote with the support of our many sponsors across the agri-food and retail sectors, for which we are enormously grateful. Without their support we simply could not run this important event.” Mr Webster adds.

In the lead-up to Open Farm Sunday on the 9th June, the campaign’s media coverage reached exceptional numbers, with a broadcast reach of over 18 million and significant engagement on social media platforms throughout the day. The planned radio day alone secured 44 interviews, reaching a consumer audience of 4.3 million.

First-time farmer host Lorna Burdge of North Waterhayne Farm in Devon shares her experience: “We were completely overwhelmed by the success of our event. The number of visitors exceeded our expectations, and the feedback was positive. We’re already planning next year’s event!”

Veteran host Michael Sly of Park Farm, Thorney, in Cambridgeshire who has participated since the first ever Open Farm Sunday in 2006 and this year attracted an incredible 12,000 visitors to his farm! Michael emphasised the event’s enduring appeal: “Open Farm Sunday has always been a highlight for us.

“The enthusiasm and curiosity from visitors, both young and old, affirm the importance of these interactions in fostering a better understanding of farming and food production.”

Visitor Carly, from Chichester, who attended an Open Farm Sunday event at Langmead Herbs Ltd. in West Sussex, highlights how the day impacted her: “Our farm visit was enjoyed by three generations; grandparents, parents, and children. We were inspired by the passion and knowledge of the farm staff and left feeling proud of our British farmers.

“It prompted great discussions about food production and the environment in the car on the way home. My children hadn't considered a farming career before our visit but now they do!”

Key statistics from the event underline the positive impact of this year’s campaign:

- 241 events, averaging 747 visitors per event, up from an average of 665 visitors in 2023
- 5% more visitors overall in 2024 than 2023 with 180,000 attending Open Farm Sunday events
- 94% of visitors rated their experience as excellent or good with 86% having learnt something new about farming during their visit and 91% of visitors motivated to buy more British food

Looking ahead, Open Farm Sunday 2025 is set for June 8th, with LEAF continuing to build on this year's momentum to ensure that even more people have the opportunity to see farming at first hand and see for themselves what farmers are doing to farm more sustainably.

For more information on Open Farm Sunday and to participate next year, visit the Open Farm Sunday website www.farmsunday.org.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR

- **For further information**, please contact the Open Farm Sunday Press Office at Pinstone:
Becky George – b.george@pinstone.co.uk Phone: 01568 313 122
- **Download high-resolution images:**
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/s3kylu0kcigdkdh63m617/AJOUSTmOKQmUmoz4cPGGufo?rlkey=r2ditqe8a5trz4izwa7osgwmf&st=appnr92d&dl=0>
- **Watch the OFS 2024 highlights video:** <https://vimeo.com/956080432/5810ac335c?share=copy>
- **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
- 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 2025 will take place on 8th June 2025.
Register to host an event at www.farmsunday.org
- To contact the Open Farm Sunday team direct:
Email: OpenFarmSunday@leaf.eco Tel: 02476 413911 Mob: 07912 463151