



LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND FARMING

Honorary President HRH The Countess of Wessex, GCVO

February 2018

Dear Editor,

British farming has got so much to be proud of. The integrity of British produce has never been greater. Yet many people still have little understanding of where their food comes from or how farming impacts on their lives. This can lead to misconceptions, unnecessary concerns and an undervaluing of what farmers do.

With lobby groups becoming more vocal and spreading misinformation together with political uncertainty post Brexit, it is more important than ever to show the public all that farming delivers.

Farming needs the support of the public, but it must be earned. Transparency is no longer optional. Consumers want all the details so they can make informed food choices. We cannot assume that they know that farmers prioritise safety and care about health, animal well-being, and the environment, among other things. We must be willing to engage in a dialogue with the public, to educate and inspire, to embrace and answer their questions in an honest, open manner.

Taking part in LEAF Open Farm Sunday (10th June) provides the perfect opportunity to show the public real farming and the pride in what we do day in, day out, and the skill, care and passion that goes into everything we do.

Our research shows the experience of visiting a farm on LEAF Open Farm Sunday is a powerful force for change. 86% of last year's visitors told us that they learned something new on the day, and four months on, 91% were more appreciative of the work farmers do and 89% said they felt more connected to the farmers that produce their food.

Authentic transparency can transform our relationship with the public, reducing fear and creating a platform for building trust. So we need to take time to show the public face to face what farmers do, explain why we do it, answer their questions and bring to life the benefits of British farming. Hundreds of farmers do this very successfully every year on LEAF Open Farm Sunday, but to have greater impact we need more farmers to host an event for farming's annual open day.

All farmers can take part. Whether your event is a simple farm walk or a full open day; a private invitation only event, or open to the wider community: it is up to you the type of event you host. The important thing is taking part. Together we can achieve so much and reach out to far more than the 2 million people who have visited events since the first Open Farm Sunday in 2006.



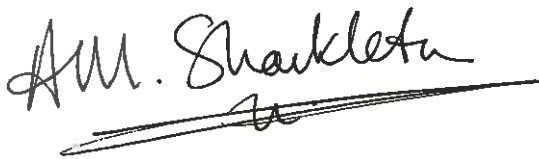
LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG
T: 024 7641 3911 enquiries@leafuk.org www.leafuk.org @LEAF_Farming

Registered in England as a company limited by guarantee (Reg'd No. 3035047) Registered office as above.
V.A.T. Reg No. GB 660 9232 38 Registered Charity No. 1045781

I am delighted that, to date, more first-time host farmers than ever before have registered to open on 10th June – to increase our impact further we need more... so please take a moment, visit www.farmsunday.org, read our case studies of last year's first-time host farmers, find out what is involved and the free support available.

Opening a farm does take time and planning, but it is so worth it – not just for the individual farm but for the whole industry – because if we don't take time to tell our story, who will?

Yours sincerely,



Annabel Shackleton

LEAF Open Farm Sunday Manager



LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

T: 024 7641 3911 enquiries@leafuk.org www.leafuk.org [@LEAF_Farming](https://twitter.com/LEAF_Farming)

Registered in England as a company limited by guarantee (Reg'd No. 3035047) Registered office as above.

V.A.T. Reg No. GB 660 9232 38 Registered Charity No. 1045781