



LEAF Open Farm Sunday visitor survey confirms positive impact

- **91% of visitors surveyed were more appreciative of the work farmers do**
- **89% said they felt more connected to the farmers that produce our food**
- **73% said they now more actively look for British produce since visiting a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event in 2017**

The results of the LEAF Open Farm Sunday visitor follow-up survey, released this week, highlight how important public access onto farms is to how consumers view British farmers and farming. Ninety-one percent of those surveyed said that after visiting a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event last year, they were more appreciative of the work farmers do and 89% said they felt more connected to the farmers that produce our food. Critically, for farmers, 73% said they now actively look for British produce to buy since visiting a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event.

Defra Secretary of State Michael Gove cited LEAF Open Farm Sunday as a “great public initiative” during his address to the Oxford Farming Conference (4th January) and explained “how campaigns such as LEAF Open Farm Sunday help reconnect urban dwellers with the earth and that they also help secure consent for investment in the countryside as well as support for British produce.”

Commenting on the findings of the research and Mr Gove’s speech, Annabel Shackleton, LEAF’s Open Farm Sunday Manager said: “At LEAF we totally agree with the Secretary of State that public access is a public good. Mr Gove made it clear that public access is rightly going to be at the heart of the new direction for farming support, post Brexit and this couldn’t happen at a more important time.

“With 84% of respondents who visited a farm for LEAF Open Farm Sunday in 2017 saying that it had changed the way they think about farming, we are urging all farmers to take part this year on the 10th June. The benefits of LEAF Open Farm Sunday are proven and extensive and for farmers it is one of the best possible ways to show the public what you do and to encourage them to support British farming by buying British produce.”

Registrations for this year’s LEAF Open Farm Sunday opened in November and 55% of farmers registered will be taking part for the first time. There is increased support for all farmers this year including new resources, a new

section on www.farmsunday.org for first time host farmers and plenty of case studies from farmers who have previously opened their gates offering advice and ideas.

One farmer who took part in LEAF Open Farm Sunday for the first time in 2017 was Ali Capper, who runs Stocks Farm on the Herefordshire / Worcestershire border. Her experience sums up the positive feedback LEAF receives every year from farmers who open their gates: “There is no doubt that doing LEAF Open Farm Sunday is a fantastic way to raise your local profile. Being able to share what we are doing is really rewarding. We had lots of stimulating discussion and questions around values, prices and costs; visitors genuinely wanted to understand the farm’s relationship with customers. LEAF Open Farm Sunday provides the perfect platform for farmers to showcase the fantastic work they do.”

To read Ali Capper’s case study in full and find out more about taking part in LEAF Open Farm Sunday visit www.farmsunday.org.

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For more information visit www.farmsunday.org. To keep up to date on Twitter follow [@OpenFarmSunday](https://twitter.com/OpenFarmSunday), [@LEAF_Farming](https://twitter.com/LEAF_Farming) and [@AnnabelOFS](https://twitter.com/AnnabelOFS)

For further information contact:

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Editor’s note:

- LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2017 follow-up survey took place in October 2017, 4 months after 11th June 2017. 1127 people who had completed the 2017 visitor survey gave permission to be contacted a second time, of these visitors 26% completed the second follow-up visitor survey.
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday is managed by **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)**. LEAF is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. It 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. LEAF has organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (LEAF is a registered [charity no: 1045781](https://www.charity.com/1045781))
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday is on 10th June 2018. All farms taking part need to register at www.farmsunday.org.
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday supports all farmers to open their gates and welcome people onto their farms to discover the world of farming. The 2018 theme will be The Great British Farm Day with a clear call to action to farmers, the farming and food industries and the public, to be part of it.
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- Alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host LEAF Open Farm School Days which run throughout June. They provide thousands of school children with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.
- Sponsors of LEAF Open Farm Sunday include: Arla Foods, Asda, BASF plc, Co-op, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, National Farmers Union, Sainsbury’s, Tesco, Waitrose, The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, with direct support from the Beef and Lamb, Cereals and Oilseeds, Dairy, Horticulture, Pork and Potatoes sectors.
- Keep up to date with LEAF’s activities via twitter www.twitter.com/LEAF_Farming and www.twitter.com/OpenFarmSunday and our regular blogs at leafmarque.wordpress.com.