

## **LOFS**

September Virtual event pre-release

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**Final**



### **Farmers urged to ‘dip a toe’ in LEAF Open Farm Sunday virtual event**

Food and biodiversity will be at the heart of LEAF Open Farm Sunday’s (LOFS) two-day virtual event in September. Featuring live interactive tours and demonstrations from farmers and chefs from around the UK on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September, organisers Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) are calling on farmers to get involved by sharing their own short film clips, photos and stories of food and farming across social media.

This builds on the success of the first virtual Online Farm Sunday held in June to mark the original date of farming’s annual open day and which attracted thousands of viewers. LOFS is teaming up with British Food Fortnight and Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight, also held in September, in an ambitious back-to-back weekend which brings a new cookery element to celebrate not only farming but the food it produces.

Farmers can take part through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using #LOFS20. The focus on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> is nutritious food, seasonal recipes and cookery demonstrations. On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> farmers across Britain are invited to virtually open their farm gates and show the public how their food is produced and the amazing work they are doing to protect and enhance the wildlife and biodiversity on their farms.

Farmers will be encouraged to go live on Facebook, send in videos and share photographs about their wildlife and biodiversity highlights. Whether it is bee friendly crops, habitat banks or wildflower meadows to boost biodiversity, the day will be a virtual celebration of all that farmers do to protect and enhance the environment and the value of nature to people’s health and wellbeing.

Annabel Shackleton, LEAF Open Farm Sunday Manager, said:

“At the very heart of LEAF Open Farm Sunday is telling the real stories of farming and this is the perfect opportunity for farmers across the country to get involved and collectively make a huge positive impact on the British public.

“It is not the event we had originally planned for 2020, but in fact both of our virtual events – in June and in September - provide an amazing opportunity to involve more farmers from all corners of the country. These could be farmers who may not have been able to host a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event for whatever reason before, but who can dip their toe in this year with as little as one photo or a self-made video on their social channels. What we want to

show is a really rich and diverse kaleidoscope of farming stories from the people who can tell them best.”

The recent pandemic has highlighted to the nation the value of food as well as fresh air and countryside, all in which farmers play a fundamental role. The virtual format creates a powerful platform to reach out to more people than ever before, including those who may not have been able to attend an open farm event in the past.

Northumberland mixed farmer, John Renner, and long-term LEAF Open Farm Sunday host farmer explained:

“We have always welcomed around a 100 people when we have opened our gates for LEAF Open Farm Sunday, which is a great number to keep it personal. That said, having taken part in the June virtual event, we reached over ten thousand, which was incredibly rewarding and great to know so many people engaged with our farm story.

“With the increased interest in cooking from scratch and the provenance of food, this is the moment to maintain the momentum and keep British food front of mind so when people are in the supermarket they actively select local, sustainably produced or consider buying direct from the farm.

“I would encourage everyone who plays a part in the UK farming industry to get involved this September. It doesn't take much time and it is really good fun. Imagine the impact if everyone in the industry - from farmers to agronomists, vets, tractor mechanics, shearers and millers - posted a picture, video or message on their social channels on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September.”

The LEAF Open Farm Sunday website will have pages devoted to the two themes, and the event's sponsors - AHDB, Arla, Asda, BASF, Co-op, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, NFU, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose - will be sharing videos, photos, activities, recipes, downloads and links throughout the two days.

For farmers considering getting involved, [LEAF's Speak Out Toolkit](#) is packed with easy-to-use guidance and resources, providing step by step support for virtual communications.

Some top tips for self-filming highlighted in a recent LOFS host farmer meeting include:

- Go live if you are confident! 82% of viewers would rather watch a live video. If this isn't an option, 'on the day' relatability is also popular. Take a photo or video that morning and post it the same day.
- When filming, keep things fun and light-hearted where you can
- Make sure you have a good backdrop – cow? combine? woods?
- If you have a particular message you want to get across – say things three times in three different ways to help the audience absorb it
- Authenticity is key – do not edit videos too much – the public like the raw material
- Use visual content – be prepared with props
- Always film with your phone in landscape (not portrait)

- Use #LOFS20, tag @OpenFarmSunday and have fun!

**/ENDS**

**For further information and images please contact Susannah Pate at Jane Craigie Marketing on [susannah@janecraigie.com](mailto:susannah@janecraigie.com) or 07841 194 897**

**Editor's notes:**

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- LEAF Online Farm Sunday takes place on 19th and 20th September 2020.  
[www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)
- 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 set up and has managed 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. Register to host at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org).
- Sponsors of LEAF Open Farm Sunday are AHDB, Arla, Asda, BASF, Co-op, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, NFU, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose