

Consumers lacking knowledge to support British farmers

- Half of consumers think we should produce more food in Britain, but 95% are unaware how much food is already grown here
- More than a quarter say they buy more British food than they did five years ago, and the same number are happy to pay more for British food
- Many consumers still struggle with basic food knowledge: nearly a quarter of consumers do not know eggs come from chickens, or that bacon comes from pigs

A new survey, carried out by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) ahead of this weekend's Open Farm Sunday, revealed that consumers want to support British farmers, although some may already be doing so without even realising. Although many consumers think we should produce more food in Britain, the majority are unaware how much our farmers already grow.

Nearly half of consumers (48%) said they thought British farmers should produce more of our own food, but the survey revealed that people vastly underestimate how much is already produced in this country. Although we are currently 60% self-sufficient in the UK, consumers on average believed this to be closer to 35%. The country of origin (42%) was the third most popular purchase driver for fresh food choices, with price (74%) and special offers (51%) the only factors proving more influential. More than a quarter (27%) of those surveyed say they buy more British food than they did five years ago, and the same number said they were happy to pay more for food produced in Britain.

The survey also revealed that over a quarter of those questioned (26%) had never visited a farm. On average, those questioned had not visited a working farm in over nine years.

Michael Sly, 47, farmer, MHS Farms, Thorney who is joining hundreds of farms in opening his gates for this weekend's Open Farm Sunday said: "It's reassuring that people want to support British farmers and are even willing to pay more to do so. The results highlight the importance of strengthening the public's connection with farming and food. Open Farm Sunday is a fantastic way

to do this. We're hoping that by getting people out onto a farm this weekend they can find out more about what, and how much food, we produce in this country."

Worryingly the survey also revealed that many adults still struggle to understand basic food knowledge, such as which food comes from which crop or animal. More than one in four people questioned (26%) were unable to identify that milk came from a dairy cow, one in five (22%) did not know that eggs came from chickens, and just under a quarter (23%) were unaware that bacon comes from pigs. More than half of those questioned (51%) also didn't make the link between a dairy cow and butter, and more than a third (37%) could not connect steak with beef cattle.

Even when it comes to popular products like beer, porridge or mustard, many fail to make the connection to what is grown on a British farm. Only one in five could identify a picture of barley as an ingredient in beer, and only one in seven knew that oats were used in porridge. Meanwhile, sixteen percent didn't know crops used for breakfast cereals are grown in this country and four in ten (42%) were unaware that mustard seed is grown on British farms.

Annabel Shackleton, Open Farm Sunday Manager at LEAF added: "Open Farm Sunday is the ideal opportunity for people of all ages to visit a farm and discover more about the world of farming and the story behind their food. By spending time on a farm, talking to farmers and to the many other professionals involved in the industry – from agronomists to vets - the day offers a unique insight into this vital industry and helps people to value the work farmers do and the food they eat."

For more information on Open Farm Sunday and to find participating farms visit www.farmsunday.org.

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For further information contact:

Ceres

Open Farm Sunday Press Office

T: [01189 475956](tel:01189475956)

E: openfarmsunday@ceres-pr.co.uk

Editor's note:

- All stats One Poll survey carried out for LEAF's Open Farm Sunday, May 2016. 2,000 UK adult respondents.
- 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](http://www.charity.com))

- The eleventh annual Open Farm Sunday will take place on 5th June 2016. It is the farming industry's annual open day. A day for farmers to open their gates and welcomes people onto their farms to discover the world of farming.
- Alongside Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host [Open Farm School Days](#) which will run throughout June. They will 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 Open Farm Sunday 2016 include: Arla Foods, Asda, BASF plc, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Jordans, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, National Farmers Union, Sainsbury's, Tesco, The Co-operative Food, Waitrose plus the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, with direct support from the following AHDB sectors: Beef and Lamb, Cereals and Oilseeds, Dairy, Horticulture, and Pork.
- 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.

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