



News release:

Stressed millennials shun the outdoors

- More than half of 18-24 year olds report feeling stressed at least once a day
- Main causes are money, work, future prospects
- Top de-stress activity is watching a film/TV

More than half of today's millennials (54%) say that they suffer from stress on a daily basis, yet many fail to get outdoors to take their mind off things, reveals a survey^[1] released today for sustainable farming charity, LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), organisers of this month's LEAF Open Farm Sunday.

Two thirds of 18-24 (66%) year olds say they spend just 60 minutes or less outside each day, with a fifth spending a worrying 10 minutes outside or less. These figures are in contrast to the generations before them – with over two thirds of those aged over 55 (68%) reporting that when they were the same age, they spent an hour or more outside every day, with four in ten (40%) spending more than four hours outdoors.

Instead of going outside, half of 18-24 year olds (50%) say they would rather stay indoors to watch a film/TV, and one in three will snack on junk food (36%) or scroll through social media (36%) to take their mind off their worries - which are dominated by anxiety about money (53%), work (52%) and future prospects (41%). Family issues (33%) and relationships (28%) make up the rest of the top five biggest causes of stress for millennials.

When questioned, nearly four in ten (37%) of millennials believe that they should spend more time in the countryside. More than a quarter (27%) believe it is easier to relax in the countryside than indoors but people still shun the outdoors.

The scientific community has proven that there is a positive link between wellbeing and spending time outdoors being close to nature, yet more than one in three (36%) of 18-24 year olds spend 30 minutes or less outside each day and 13% cannot remember the last time they took a walk in the countryside. This is in stark contrast to those aged over 55 of whom 39% said they spent at least three hours a day outdoors when they were that age.

There are a number of reasons millennials are opting to stay indoors rather head outside. Over half (51%) complain it is too cold and nearly three in ten (29%) say it is too muddy,

^[1] Survey conducted with 2,000 adults aged 18-65+ during April 2018 by Mortar

whilst over a fifth (22%) don't like insects and bugs and one in ten (9%) are not confident that they have the right clothes to wear.

When they do get outside though, nearly one in six (58%) 18-24 year olds admit a walk in the countryside can help relax them, yet many are interrupting their relaxation with technology. More than one in four say they have to take their phone with them when they visit the countryside, with one in five (20%) claiming they can't go more than ten minutes without checking their phone.

Meanwhile half of them (52%) say whether somewhere is picturesque enough to make good photos influences their decision of where to go outdoors - with more than a quarter (27%) saying it is actually the deciding factor.

Over the past decade, the University of Essex has been researching people's perception of their own mental health and wellbeing and whether this changes after they have gone on a trip to a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event. The most recent findings from LEAF Open Farm Sunday events in June 2017^[2] show that spending time going for a walk, visiting a farm or with animals outdoors makes people feel happier. In the study, people who visited a farm said it had lifted their mood (63%), boosted their energy (44%) and they felt less tense (34%). Outdoor activities (such as nature walks, tours of the farm and seeing the animals that take place on Open Farm Sunday) can increase connectedness to nature, which is lower for the younger millennial generation compared to the over 55s.

Dr Mike Rogerson PhD, AFHEA from the University of Essex, who has researched the impact of attending LEAF Open Farm Sunday events said: "Spending time outdoors benefits our mental and physical health and this can be important for us all, including young people experiencing depression, anxiety or stress. Something as simple as going for a walk or visiting a local park or farm can make a massive impact and events such as Open Farm Sunday can play an important role in our society."

The survey has been timed to coincide with the annual LEAF Open Farm Sunday on 10th June 2018, which sees hundreds of farms across the country open their gates to the public with activities ranging from guided tours, getting up close to farm animals, adventure trails through woodland, tractor and trailer rides, craft activities, talks and food tastings.

In addition, LEAF Open Farm School Days - the nationwide initiative to get children out onto farms and learning about where their food comes from – will run alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday throughout June. Focusing on 14-18 year olds, LEAF is urging schools to set up visits to help lessen the negative effects a lack of time spent in nature can have.

^[2] University of Essex analysed the findings of questionnaires given to 83 people who visited a farm during Open Farm Sunday 2017 who recorded how they felt before and after their farm visit

Sustainable farming charity, LEAF, is urging young people and families to spend more time outside to reduce stress and improve mood.

LEAF Open Farm Sunday Manager Annabel Shackleton said; “Visiting a farm on LEAF Open Farm Sunday is the perfect opportunity for young people to explore and enjoy the great outdoors, reconnect with nature and reap the benefits that comes with this. Farms all over the country from Jersey to Scotland are opening their farm and hosting lots of activities for all ages. The best news is that entry and parking are free for most.”

For more information about LEAF Open Farm Sunday and to find a farm to visit on 10th June go to www.farmsunday.org

5 ways to de-stress outdoors:

1. Take a stroll in the countryside and take time to appreciate all that is around you
2. Listen out for the birds in the hedgerows, stand and watch cows grazing, bees collecting pollen, or just the wheat blowing in the breeze
3. Relax as you breathe in the smell of the trees and wildflowers
4. Take off your shoes and feel the grass beneath your feet
5. Have a picnic and take time to really taste your food.

- ENDS -

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

For further information contact:

Ceres

LEAF Open Farm Sunday Press Office T: [01189 475956](tel:01189475956) E: openfarmsunday@ceres-pr.co.uk

Editors notes:

- **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)
- LEAF Open Farm Sunday offers a chance for all farmers to open their gates and welcome people onto their farms to discover the world of farming

- LEAF Open Farm Sunday 2018 takes place on the 10th June 2018. Farmers wanting to host an event are asked to register at www.farmsunday.org
- **LEAF Open Farm School Days** run alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday. The programme supports hundreds of farms across Britain to host on farm school visits 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 2018 are: Arla Foods, Asda, BASF plc, Co-op, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, The National Farmers' Union, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.
- **Social media:** To keep up to date on Twitter follow @OpenFarmSunday, @LEAF_Farming and @AnnabelOFS