Open Farm Sunday 2015
Sharing Successes

- 10 Years of Open Farm Sunday
- 2015 Highlights
- Extensive media reach
- Our sponsors and supporters
- Supporting our host farmers
- Our visitors
- Open Farm School Days
Open Farm Sunday
A huge success story

2015 has been a special year as it marked the 10th anniversary of Open Farm Sunday. A year in which we celebrated and thanked the hundreds of farmers who have opened their gates, their helpers, the millions of visitors going out onto farms and all our wonderful sponsors who have supported the campaign since the beginning and been a part of its success.

Managed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) since 2006, Open Farm Sunday is now firmly established as the farming industry's annual open day. It is one of the industry's biggest success stories and the single most effective and supported day in the farming calendar. Open Farm Sunday unites the whole industry, all coming together to showcase the very best of British farming.

LEAF is passionate about engaging people with farming and food. We believe it is a critical part of delivering a more sustainable food system. Providing people with opportunities to discover how their food is produced, where it comes from and meeting the farmers who produce it, builds trust and helps to ensure people really value the food they eat.

Over the last 10 years, Open Farm Sunday has had a huge impact in raising awareness amongst the public about what goes into producing their food and what farmers do to manage our countryside. Over 1400 farmers have opened their gates welcoming over 1.6 million visitors. It has been an incredible achievement and one we look forward to building on over the next 10 years.

10 Years of Growth
It was whilst on my Nuffield Farming Scholarship travels that I came across the concept of a collaborative farm open day. Taking the example and scaling it across the whole of the British Isles made perfect sense and LEAF agreed to run an Open Farm Sunday pilot in 2006.

On our farm, we threw open our gates at 10am and waited. By the end of the day, nearly 450 people had visited us. Ten years on and our event has evolved considerably. We try something new every year and many of our 30+ helpers return every year to lend a hand. Hoards of visitors now see Open Farm Sunday as a ‘must do’ event in their calendar. This year, 3,500 adults and children came to our farm. Pigs raced, auctioneers bellowed, farmers charmed, cows mooed, bees buzzed, and crops danced. Most importantly, there was a connection. Open Farm Sunday has become the country’s most well-known conduit for fusing farmers and the public together.
2006 First ever Open Farm Sunday
300 farms involved
30,000 visitors
“Team work made the dream work!”

2007 Big hit for second year
400 farms & 7,000 helpers
150,000 visitors
“Fantastic day, really good feedback from visitors”

2008 New LEAF Farm Walks and Talks book
400 farms & 4,800 helpers
150,000 visitors
“The interest from people was quite unbelievable”

2009 Website given a facelift with new ‘Find a Farm’ section
412 farms & 5,500 helpers
140,000 visitors
“What a well organised, enjoyable and fascinating day”

2010 New team of 10 Regional Co-ordinators
420 farms & 6,150 helpers
184,000 visitors
“An absolutely brilliant day out”

2011 Adam Henson supported the day and hosted our media video
362 farms including a LEAF Marque farm in Kenya
120,000 visitors
“Wet but certainly not a washout!”

2012 1st national Open Farm Sunday pollinator survey
335 farms including one in Spain
150,000 visitors
“It has reignited my passion for farming”

2013 New pilot Open Farm School Days
365 farms & 6,000 helpers
200,000 visitors – 25% increase on 2012
“I never imagined how much there was I didn’t know”

2014 375 farms & 8,000 helpers
207,000 visitors
“It’s great being part of a national event to celebrate farming”

2015 Record-breaking 10th anniversary
389 farms & 10,000 helpers
291,000 visitors – 40% increase on 2014
“Brilliantly organised, and everyone was so helpful and informative”

10th anniversary highlights:
1.6 million visitors since 2006
1,400 host farms since 2006
10,000 helpers supported 10th year
1 in 5 visitors in 2015 had never visited a farm before
50:50 urban/rural split in 2015

www.farmsunday.org
2015 Highlights
A record breaking year

The theme for our 10th anniversary year was celebrating British farming and food and we certainly did this in style! The sun shone and families across Britain headed out on to farms in their thousands. For the first time ever, total visitor numbers went over the quarter of a million mark with over 291,000 people visiting events. That's a tremendous 40% increase in visitors compared with 2014.

389 dedicated farmers hosted events from Lands End to the Highlands in Scotland – many doing Open Farm Sunday for the first time, plus lots of regulars who joined in again for this very special anniversary year. As always, there were a whole range of events from small group farm walks through to large events attracting thousands of visitors. Once again there was an increase in the number of larger events - 21 farms had over 3000 visitors!

- 18% of farms had less than 100 visitors
- 39% of farms had 100-499 visitors
- 24% of farms had 500-1000 visitors
- 19% of farms had over 1000 visitors
- Average number of visitors per event 749 – our highest to date!

Cross industry support

The whole industry came together to support our 10th anniversary. Key industry representatives attended the launch of Open Farm Sunday 2015 at The House of Commons back in November 2014. In Scotland, early in March, Alex Ferguson MSP hosted an Open Farm Sunday reception in Holyrood. Political support didn’t stop there, on the day, politicians visited farms across Britain, including Defra Farming Minister George Eustice MP who joined LEAF Chief Executive, Caroline Drummond MBE on a dairy farm in Kent.
Extensive media reach

The ‘buzz’ around Open Farm Sunday was louder than ever and could be heard well beyond the farm gate. Open Farm Sunday certainly hit the headlines as we saw extensive coverage across broadcast, print and digital media. This year we had the highest number of pieces of media coverage (1,132), a 34% increase compared with 2014, and a huge increase in social media reach and engagement.

Open Farm Sunday featured in many national magazines and newspapers including The Telegraph, Times, Mirror, Star, Sun, Mail, Express and Huffington Post. Television and radio coverage included mentions on BBC Radio 2 from Chris Evans, Steve Wright and Simon Mayo, ‘Money Saving Expert’ Martin Lewis on Good Morning Britain and James Martin on Saturday Kitchen. Open Farm Sunday was once again a recurring theme on BBC Radio 4’s long running rural drama, The Archers, with two of their farms opening on the day!

Increased engagement

One of our strategies for this year’s communications campaign was to build our digital on-line presence. It was really encouraging to see a 21% increase in Twitter followers and a staggering 82% increase in Facebook fans. A new suite of digital graphics and banners were shared by many and two new animated videos had more than 20,000 views. There was a 32% increase in visits to the Open Farm Sunday website in May and June, and finally, our campaign hashtag #OFS15 was a trending topic on Twitter on Open Farm Sunday itself.

31 pieces of national news
26 pieces of national broadcast
862 pieces of regional news
1,132 pieces of coverage in total
Our sponsors and supporters

Open Farm Sunday receives huge support from across the farming and food industries. The support from our sponsors is crucial and enables us to achieve so much together. Many of our sponsors have supported Open Farm Sunday since the early years. A huge thank you to all our sponsors and supporters.

The involvement of our sponsors goes well beyond financial support. Throughout the run up to Open Farm Sunday, they promoted the campaign encouraging their farmer clients to open up and their customers to visit a farm on the day. Many of our sponsors were out and about on Open Farm Sunday with their own information stands, running activities and talking to the public about sustainable farming and food.

Lots of our sponsors produced their own resources including activity booklets, seed packets, posters and handouts explaining the facts about farming in a fun and engaging way. Kelloggs produced some fantastic ‘Grain to Cereal’ information packs and ‘seed head’ packs for children.

In Scotland, promotional activity was further supported by Quality Meat Scotland, and supported by NFU Scotland, The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs and The Royal Highland Education Trust.

Prize draws and competitions

Aldi, Asda, Marks and Spencer, The Tesco Eat Happy Project and Waitrose all generously donated £100 gift cards for our visitor survey prize draw. We also teamed up with Britains Toys and Aardman Animations to give away John Deere toy tractors and the new Shaun the Sheep DVD, in a range of prize draws. This year’s photography competition saw a huge increase in entries with more than 800 pictures shared on Facebook. Our grateful thanks to Asda for donating the main prize.
Supporting our host farmers

Throughout the year the LEAF team worked hard to ensure that host farmers got the help and support they needed, when they needed it.

Comprehensive resources

LEAF developed a range of free resources for host farmers. All farms, once registered, received a copy of the all-important, comprehensive host farmer handbook plus a set of new activity sheets, developed in partnership with the National Farmers Union. Other new resources included ‘Ask me badges’ to wear on the day, the new LEAF Farm Trail promoting sustainable farming and a set of downloadable digital assets for host farmers to use in their social media communications. These assets proved a real hit with farmers using them on their websites, in emails and on Twitter and Facebook. Other resources included gate banners, posters, stickers, flyers, postcards, polo shirts and more - all designed to ensure farmers were well equipped to give their visitors a day to remember!

Regional support

Our team of eight wonderful Open Farm Sunday regional co-ordinators, all experienced host farmers, provided support at a local level – answering questions, offering advice, sharing top tips and helping to promote Open Farm Sunday across their region.

15 free Open Farm Sunday Information Events were held this year. The events provided an invaluable opportunity for farmers to exchange ideas and advice – whether they were opening for the first or the tenth time! Regional Co-ordinators updated farmers on the latest health and safety regulations, as well as offering ideas on how to make Open Farm Sunday events as enjoyable for visitors as possible.

Andy Guy, East Midlands Regional Co-ordinator, promoting Open Farm Sunday on his local radio station

Information Events help to inspire and inform host farmers
Our host farmers

Open Farm Sunday would not happen without the hard work, inspiration and engagement of hundreds of farmers up and down the country who want to open their gates and share their passion for farming.

Thank you to the 389 farmers who opened up for this year’s Open Farm Sunday and their 10,000 helpers. What amazing ambassadors for our industry – showcasing the very best of British agriculture. They opened all over the country with all sizes and types of farms. Once again, the majority of events took place in England but it was really good to see an increase in farms in Scotland.

Many business benefits

As well as the pleasure of sharing their passion for farming and the countryside, lots of our host farmers report numerous business benefits from taking part in Open Farm Sunday, including improved community engagement, increased sales, raised local profile and of course showing any diversification projects they are involved with.

The range and diversity of activities our host farmers offer to their visitors never ceases to amaze! Machinery displays, tractor and trailers rides, pond dipping, milking demonstrations through to cookery demonstrations. All of them helping visitors to increase their understanding of farming and food production in a fun and engaging way.

Percentage of farms showcasing each industry/feature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry/Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers &amp; Plants</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Stewardship</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm shop/retail</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of farms and visitors per region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Farms</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>59,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>44,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humber</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>389</strong></td>
<td><strong>291,396</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What our host farmers said...

"So worthwhile - visitors are very interested in what goes on and it is a great experience for them and us."

"The best bit was talking about our breeding programme and our visitors’ realisation of how technical our job is."

"It gives us a lot of pleasure seeing people reconnect with food production."

"Brilliant day for all. Fantastic turn out. Roll on next year."

"It’s great to let the public see that farming and wildlife can go together to the benefit of both."

"A thoroughly successful event and we loved taking part. Can’t wait until next year!"

"The feedback from visitors when they were leaving was wonderful - all positive!"

www.farmsunday.org
This year saw an unprecedented 40% increase in visitors going out onto farms on Open Farm Sunday – over 290,000 people visited a farm to discover more about how their food is produced and meet the farmers who produce it.

It is clear that Open Farm Sunday is reaching out to people who would not normally have the opportunity of visiting a farm and experiencing all the sights, sounds and smells! For one in five visitors, Open Farm Sunday was their first experience of visiting a farm. Our target audience is families with children age 3 to 11 years. 25% of visitors were aged 0 to 11 years.

More and more visitors are finding out about Open Farm Sunday through digital communications. There was a massive 250% increase in the number of visitors who said they heard about Open Farm Sunday via Facebook.

40% increase in visitors*
40% increase in first time visitors*
50:50 urban rural split
49% growth in visitors from urban areas*
81% of visitors learnt something new
* compared to 2014

About our visitors and their feedback

“Absolutely amazing to see the amount of work and expertise that goes into producing a pint of milk.”

“My two sons loved being able to climb inside a combine harvester! The look of wonder on their faces was very memorable!”

“The tractor and trailer ride was the highlight of the day. We toured the whole farm and the farmer explained why he was growing a particular crop, what it would be used for and how he looks after his crops.”
“We learnt so much. How farmers use technology especially in protecting the environment, the importance of understanding soil quality and how farmers are balancing crop production with environmental management. Just fascinating, we hadn’t realised there was so much involved in producing our food.”

“We were able to see how farmers are protecting the environment and seeing the wealth of insects and wildlife on the farm was a true joy.”

Knowledge of farmer’s role in producing food

Have you visited an Open Farm Sunday event before?

- 33% Yes (96,161)
- 20% No, and never visited a farm before (58,279)
- 47% No, but have visited a farm before (136,956)

Average age and gender of visitors:

How did you hear about Open Farm Sunday?

Facebook
Word of mouth
Roadside banner
Website
Poster/Flyer
Radio
Newspaper
TV
Magazine
Twitter
Blogs

www.farmsunday.org
Open Farm School Days

Farms are really inspiring places. They allow children to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence outside the classroom. Getting children outdoors and experiencing the sights and sounds of a real working farm plays a hugely important role in reconnecting the next generation with where their food comes from and how it is produced. Open Farm School Days is key to delivering this. Now in its third year, we extended the initiative throughout June and saw over 6,000 school children flock to farms to discover more about where their food comes from. A huge thank you to all the farmers who hosted visits, their teachers and to the children themselves for their energy, excitement and amazing questions!

This year, we teamed up with Farming And Countryside Education (FACE) to pilot four free half day School Farm Visit workshops for farmers hosting school visits. Topics covered included planning the visit, contacting schools and farm activity ideas linked to the curriculum.

Our new LEAF Farm Trail was used during many farm visits providing a fun and engaging way for children to explore the farm and learn about key areas of sustainable farming – based around the nine sections of Integrated Farm Management. Topics covered include: soil, crops, recycling, animals, energy, water, nature, community and organisation. They are designed for all farms, regardless of the farm enterprise. We are extremely grateful to the Ernest Cook Trust for supporting the production of LEAF’s Farm Trail.

LEAF Demonstration Farmers, Nick and Claire Bragg from Frogmary Green Farm in Somerset, welcomed over 300 children to their Open Farm School Days event.

“We love sharing what we do with children. They are always fascinated to see all our chicks, learn about how we look after them, how they live and what they eat. We always try to link what the children see on the farm back to their food. It’s so rewarding and we see it as our responsibility as farmers to open children’s hearts and minds to the wonders of farming.”

New LEAF Farm Trail

Open Farm Sunday 2016

Open Farm Sunday 5th June
Open Farm School Days throughout June

Register your events at www.farmsunday.org from 1st December 2015

Open Farm Sunday is organised by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming).
To find out more about our work and how to support us, please go to www.leafuk.org.

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