



Open Farm Sunday  
13 June 2010



# Open Farm Sunday 2010

Farming's Great Event





Open Farm Sunday is an annual event that gives everyone the chance to meet the farmers who grow their food and care for the countryside. Organised by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), and involving a host of people from the food and farming industry, it is farming's annual open day. Now a highly valued and important event in the calendar, it is worth around £4.3 million to the food and farming industry.

Hundreds of farmers and landowners open their farms, with help from many thousands of neighbouring farms, trade representatives and others from the rural community. Each event is unique and they range in size from a small farm walk of a dozen or so, to jamborees welcoming thousands of members of the public to a rich array of fun and engaging activities. Throughout the focus is on the story behind our food and its links with nature.

Please help support our work by joining LEAF today.

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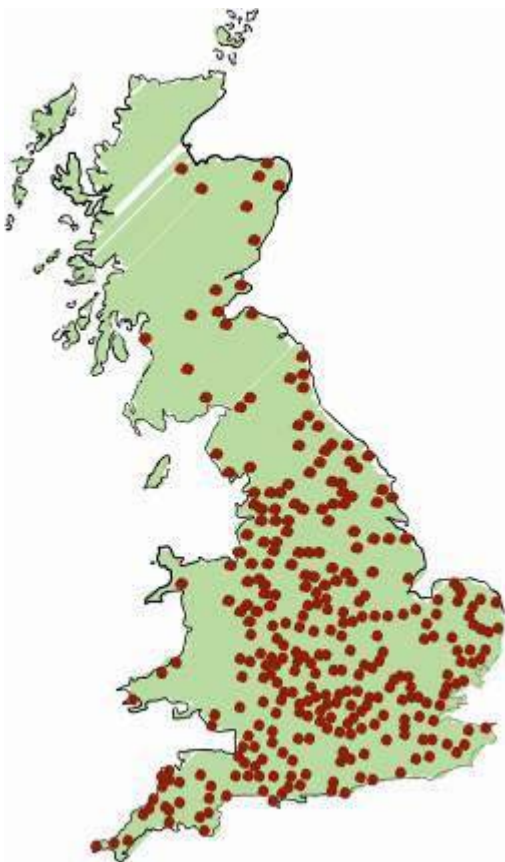
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# Key successes

## Numbers swell

Open Farm Sunday 2010 drew the biggest crowds in its five-year history. 184,000 visitors attended events on 420 farms – a fantastic 31% up on 2009. There were 6,150 helpers, including employees, family members, neighbouring farmers, advisors and sponsors – a 12% increase on 2009 and an average of 15 per event. A big thank you to everyone who helped make it all happen!



	Number of events		Number of visitors	
	2010	2009	2010	2009
South West	95	86	41,620	28,329
South East	79	73	34,611	24,047
East of England	72	76	31,544	25,035
East Midlands	34	35	14,896	11,529
West Midlands	37	50	16,210	16,471
North West	27	26	11,829	8,565
Yorkshire and Humber	30	33	13,143	10,871
North East and Cumbria	16	18	7,010	5,929
Scotland	18	17	7,886	5,600
Wales	12	11	5,257	3,624
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>184,006</b>	<b>140,000</b>

## Why the increase?

The number of host farmers remains the same, but events are tending to get bigger. Many farmers who had hosted events in previous years reported higher attendance.

Neighbouring farmers are working together and rotating events around their community, allowing them to resource bigger events. And the reputation of Open Farm Sunday is growing, with a loyal core of frequent visitors bringing in neighbours, friends and family.

## A regional success

New for 2010 was the introduction of Open Farm Sunday farmer coordinators in all the regions. As a result Open Farm Sunday took on a sense of local identity which was both a benefit for farmers and increased public interest. This regional identity has also meant that Open Farm Sunday is now on the map with a number of regional and local organisations and initiatives.

The number of visitors swelled considerably in some areas, especially the South West, almost 50% up on 2009. There was also a big increase in the South East while the East of England enjoyed another high-turnout year. The weather proved a challenge in the North West and West Midlands, although feedback from individual events was good, despite the rain.



## Government support

Support for Open Farm Sunday came from the highest level with no fewer than three Defra ministers visiting their local farms, including Secretary of State for Environment Caroline Spelman, Food and Farming Minister Jim Paice, and Lord Henley. It was a great opportunity for policy-makers to see host farmers demonstrate how food is grown, its links with nature and why farms matter.

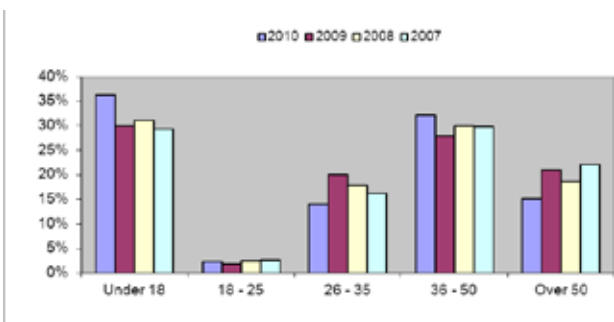
Defra and Natural England, both long term sponsors of Open Farm Sunday, also strongly encouraged all their employees to visit a farm or help out on the day. This is a great indication of the importance government gives to reconnecting the public with how their food is grown and why farming and our countryside matter.



# The visitors

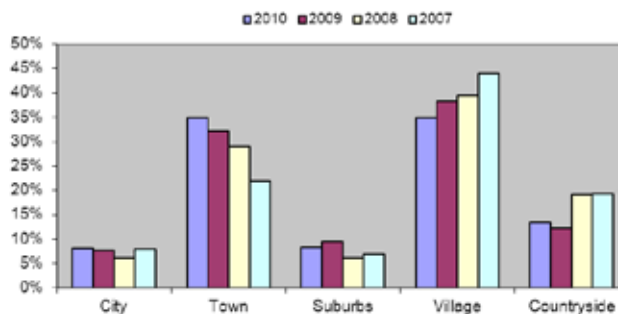
## Thumbs up from families

The great news for 2010 is a big increase in families visiting events – 85% of those under 18 were primary school children. Open Farm Sunday is unique in that it provides a wonderful day out for all the family to share the joys of being out in the countryside and meeting the farmers that produce our food.



## Urban rise

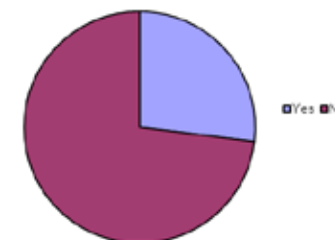
It was also great to see an increase in visitors from cities and towns. It is a sign that the reputation of Open Farm Sunday is spreading beyond its core rural heartland, although most visitors are still from the local community.



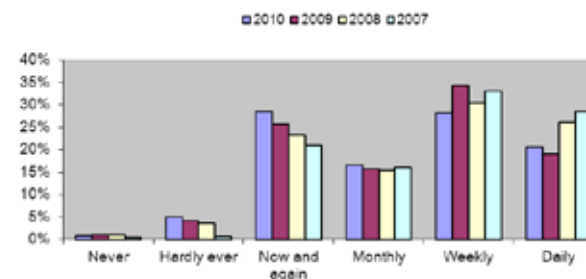
## First-time fervour

Open Farm Sunday is attracting more and more people who do not usually visit the countryside. 73% of visitors had never been to an event before.

Have you been to an Open Farm Sunday event before?



How often the visitors go to the countryside



## Boys vs girls

As in previous years, more women than men visited a farm on Open Farm Sunday.



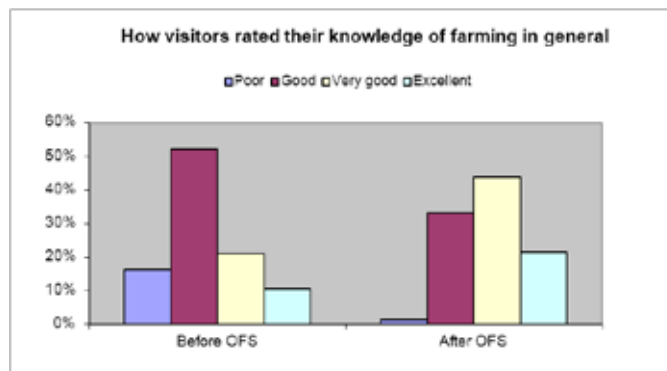
## How did visitors rate their day?

A stunning 98% of visitors rated their event 'good', 'amazing' or 'brilliant'. The comments left by visitors underline how much they enjoyed their day. There is no doubt that this is down to the hard work of host farmers putting on great events – thank you!



## What did they learn?

Once again feedback shows Open Farm Sunday plays an important part in explaining to the general public the important links between food, farming and the environment. After visiting a farm, there was a clear shift in their understanding of these issues from 'poor' or 'good' to 'very good' or 'excellent'.



## And what did they have to say?

Perhaps the most heartening aspects of Open Farm Sunday are the enthusiastic endorsement and unreserved gratitude visitors are only too happy to share.

*I had no idea what to expect, but it was brilliant. Everyone who worked on the farm was friendly and chatty and we learned so much. The children learned even more.*

*You really make farming come alive.*

*We all had a fantastic time, tasted some lovely new foods and had a truly wonderful day. What a fab idea - we are looking forward to next year!*

*We had a fantastic day! We are looking forward to next year already!*

*The diversity - opportunity to see and touch animals, speak to wildlife experts, to farmers and to explore and enjoy the countryside. Can't speak highly enough.*

*Fabulous idea! Can we have it twice a year please?!*

*Having never been lucky enough to visit a working farm our children were amazed at being able to get up close to all the animals and machinery, what an experience for all of us.*

*The farmer and family were superb - so proud and enthusiastic.*

*Today was absolutely brilliant and an excellent experience, would really love to go again next year or if it were available, sooner.*

*This was our first time going to this event, but it won't be our last*

*Love it and look forward to it every year, everyone is so passionate about what they do and the kids love it.*

*So nice to be able to do something fun and educational without having to spend a fortune!*

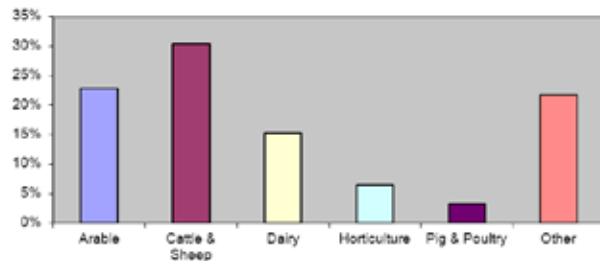
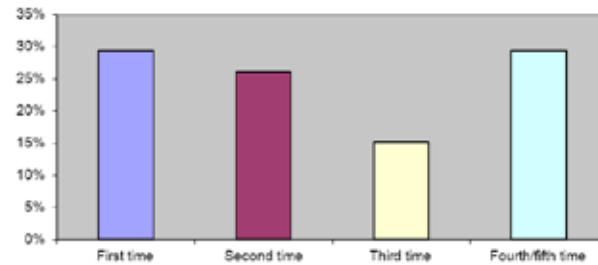
*Excellent. Thank you, thank you and thank you.*



# The host farmers

## Who took part?

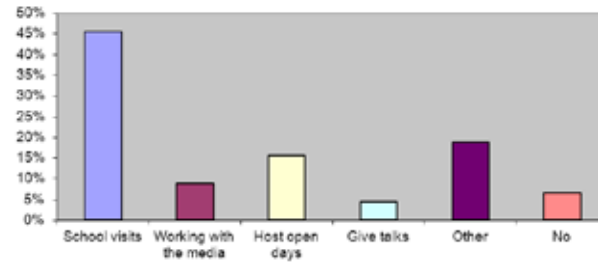
Farms of every size and type hosted events, from large arable estates right through to small mixed farms, organic and bio-dynamic farms. It was great to see lots of new farms getting involved, with almost 30% of farmers taking part for the first time.



Most were arable, beef or sheep farmers. The good news for 2010 was that a larger number of dairy farmers took part than in previous years.

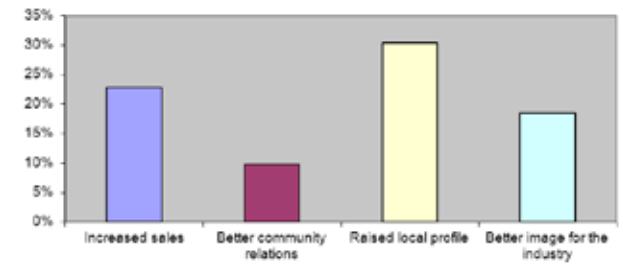
But few hosts were complete novices at telling the food and farming story, with many regularly hosting school visits.

Have you communicated the food and farming story before, and if so, how?



## A business boost

Almost 80% of those who hosted an event identified a real business benefit. For



those who sell produce direct it is a good way to boost sales, although almost a third of hosts found Open Farm Sunday a great way to raise local profile. This could be for a new or established diversification or for the core farming activity. For many hosts it is an important opportunity to demonstrate the public good and services that farmers deliver.

But that is just part of what host farmers get out of it:

*"Hosting Open Farm Sunday was a lot of work, but we had such a fantastic time on the day talking to visitors and seeing the looks on children's faces when they met all the animals. The public were so nice, every farmer should do it at least once!"* **Jessica Collins, Cornwall**

*"The fantastic feedback we received from people as they left the farm made all the effort put in worth it. We were all buzzing for days after!"* **Annie Cox, Norfolk**

*"It is a huge amount of work with the numbers of visitors that we have on the day, but Open Farm Sunday has proved to be one of the most enjoyable things we do on the farm. It is a real team effort which everyone seems to gain a lot from."* **Jon Birchall, Bedfordshire**

*"It's a pleasure for our family to show our farm to people who are usually excluded from farmland. Farmers need to recognise that they are a small minority of the population and they need the goodwill of the masses to allow them to retain their occupation of the land."* **Gordon Hawcroft, York**

*"We all had a wonderful time – the public asked if we did this every Sunday!"* **Peter Davies, Vale of Glamorgan**

*"A wonderful day had by all, helpers and visitors alike. Can we do it again next week?"* **Su Illsley, Dorset**

## Why did farmers take part?

Open Farm Sunday hosts share a passion for farming and a desire to reconnect the public with the food they eat.

*We have a genuine desire to re-connect people with their food and to increase awareness of our brand, as we retail our own lamb.*

*It's become a community event for us. We get a buzz from interacting with the public, and pleasure from seeing people leaving happy and positive.*

*Open Farm Sunday has added visitors to the farm shop.*

*We took part to build up experience, audience and feedback with our educational trust*

*We wanted to let people see what we are doing and learn more about farming. We are proud of our farm and feel it is good for the community spirit. We also had a great deal of interest in our beef sales.*

*We want to improve community relations and it's fun for us too.*

*I've a real desire to share an occupation that I love with those around us so they have a better understanding of how we care for and produce food in the countryside.*

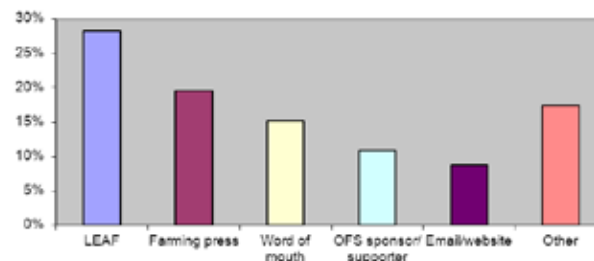
*I want to engage with our local community and promote an industry I feel so passionate about.*

## How did they hear about it?

The huge success of Open Farm Sunday is down to the farmer hosts themselves. But getting farmers on board has been a real team achievement. LEAF worked closely with the farming press, and *Farmers Weekly* in particular, to prompt previous hosts and encourage new farmers to give it a go. Sponsors, notably Natural England and NFU played a key role here.



How did you hear about Open Farm Sunday?



## Sponsor support

Open Farm Sunday benefits from generous cross-industry support. But sponsors provide essential support in other key areas, such as providing resources, publicity and even helping staff events, and this involvement is recognised by 82% of host farmers. 78% of hosts also make use of resources provided by sponsors, with the NFU, EBLEX and HGCA resources being the most popular.

## Activities offered

The beauty of Open Farm Sunday is the range of the events that take place across the country. Here are just a few of the activities that went on:

*Silage-making, sheep-shearing, foot-trimming; bread-making, cream separation, weaving*

*Tractor and trailer rides, pig-racing, vegetable olympics*

*Animal mask-making, mushy pea-tasting, seed-planting*

*Milking demonstrations, pregnancy diagnosis of sheep and cattle, dry stone walling*

*Lamb-feeding, bug hotel-building, strawberry display*

*Pond-dipping, wormery investigations, den-building*

*Plant a potato, sit in a tractor, herd the sheep*

*...or just a quiet guided tour of a working farm.*





## Our support for host farmers



### Workshops

Across the country 16 Open Farm Sunday workshops were run to gear farmers up for the big day! Overall, 162 people attended a workshop and learnt about generating publicity, activities for the day, health and safety, crowd control, handling tricky questions and much more! For those who could not attend, a new on-line workshop shared tips from experienced Open Farm Sunday hosts ([www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)).



### Regional coordinators

New for 2010 is a team of 10 regional coordinators. These experienced Open Farm Sunday host farmers ran the workshops in their regions and were on hand to answer specific queries. They also coordinated efforts locally to publicise the event and ensured Open Farm Sunday was a regional success, as well as a national one – a big thank you for the huge effort they put in.

### Resources and website

Once again host farmers were provided with a free resource pack. This included everything they would need to put on a fun event, such as publicity material (posters, flyers, postcards, banners), handbook, polo shirt, stickers, activity books and lots more! The website provided host farmers with the means to order resources, register their event and get the latest advice on topics such as hand-washing and health and safety. Previous hosts could call up last year's details, saving them the chore of re-registering.



[www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)



## Working with the media

Pivotal to the success of Open Farm Sunday is a co-ordinated media campaign. It is a team effort between host farmers at a local level, helped by LEAF's publicity material, and a media campaign run by Ceres. This addresses the needs of both national print and broadcast publications, and key regional outlets.

### How did visitors hear about Open Farm Sunday?

Word of mouth is the way most visitors hear about an event. Whether they read an article in a magazine, newspaper or online, hear something on the radio or see a roadside banner, poster or flyer (or most likely a combination of several of these), it all underlines the importance of publicity. This includes both the extensive national and regional media campaign and the vital work host farmers do themselves. This year's results emphasise the importance of local papers and radio in spreading the word.

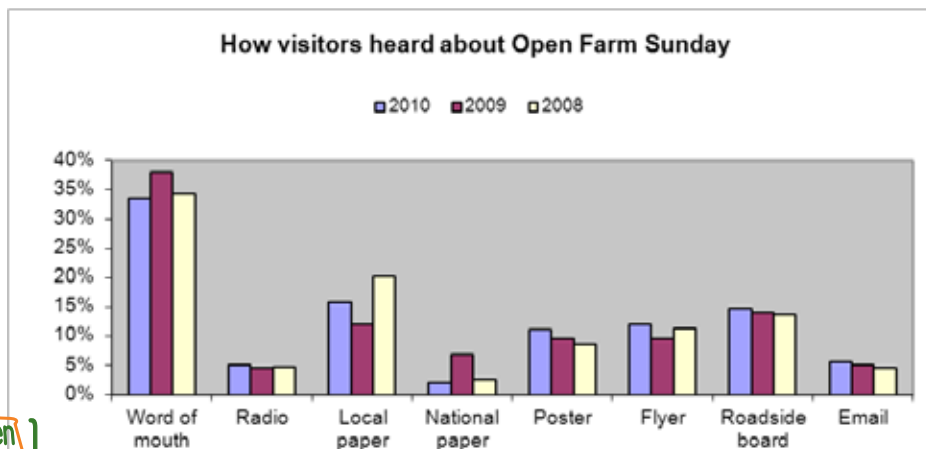
### The media campaign

This year, in recognition of the changing media landscape, the news story was brought to life in a video which was fronted by farming champion Jimmy Doherty. The video was then placed on several high profile websites, including thesun.co.uk, goodtoknow.co.uk and jamieoliver.com and became editor's choice on the independent.co.uk. This activity alone reached over 23 million users.



### Managing the E Coli issue

The publication of the Griffin Report and its surrounding publicity coincided directly with Open Farm Sunday. A key part of the PR activity was therefore to manage this to ensure that consumers were not unnecessarily worried about visiting a farm and that farmers fully understood their responsibilities and how to respond to media enquires. With more visitors visiting a farm than ever before and no negative coverage on farm visits this activity was clearly a success.



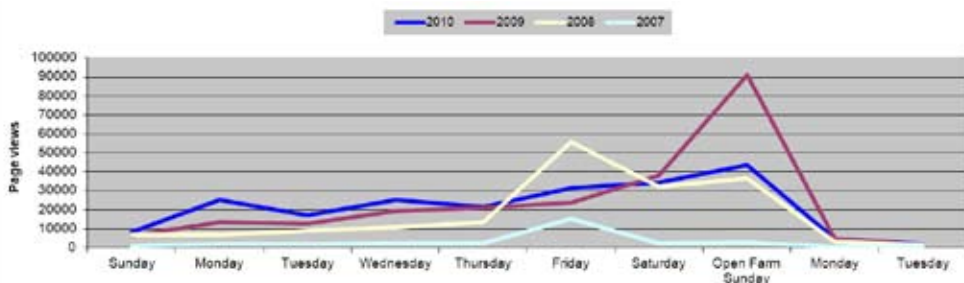
## Coverage highlights:

- Fantastic support from the Archers, with all three farms in Ambridge taking part and details of the events delivered through the hugely popular Archers Addicts website.
- Coverage in titles such as the Sunday Mirror, reaching new and important audiences.
- Good support from sponsors with coverage achieved in Asda magazine and Waitrose Weekend.

## Campaign achievements:

- 127 million opportunities to see – a significant increase on the 2009 campaign.
- 66 national press cuttings, including core titles such as Independent and Saturday Telegraph Magazine.
- 334 regional press cuttings - 50% up on 2009
- 53 pieces of national and regional broadcast - a third more regional radio mentions than 2009.

## Web results



Reliable, consistent traffic to the Open Farm Sunday website is the aim of the campaign so that visitors can find the location of their nearest open farm event.



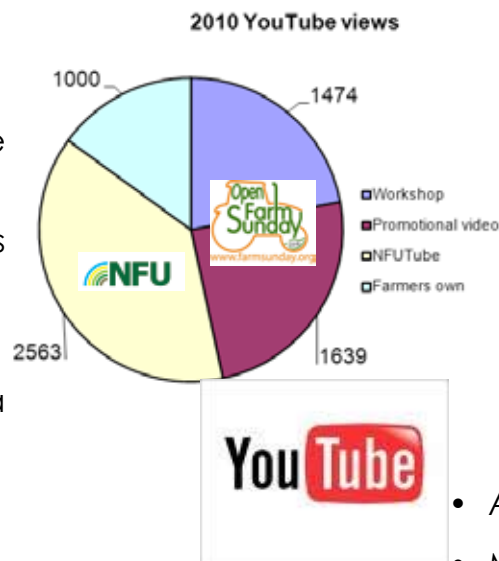
The promotional video, featuring Jimmy Doherty, helped achieve good referral rates from high-traffic websites. In total the site received over 200,000 page requests during the week, that undoubtedly contributed to the high visitor turnout on the day. In previous years a national media event had been held two or three days beforehand to generate publicity.

## Growing the online community

The video was also uploaded to YouTube, along with the workshop videos. These added to a growing number of videos of events from host farmers and some produced by NFUTube.

NFU staff and individual farmers did a great job recording these successful events and posting the videos online for all to see – let's hope we see more of them in 2011!

- Almost 7000 YouTube views during 2010
- More than 1200 followers on Twitter



These great results are helping to extend the reach and engagement of the campaign.



[www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)



# Thank you!

## Sponsors

A huge thank you to all our sponsors, without whose support, both financial and in-kind, Open Farm Sunday simply would not have happened.

### Principal sponsors



### Additional sponsors



## Farmers

Many thanks to all the farmers, helpers and supporters who took part in Open Farm Sunday. Every event is unique and individual, but it is the farmers who lie at the centre of it. It is their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment that makes Open Farm Sunday a success and a day to be proud of.



## The help and support we received helped LEAF to:

- Organise 16 workshops across the UK to provide host farmers and helpers with the skills to host successful Open Farm Sunday events
- Produce a series of videos of tips from experienced hosts which built into an online workshop to provide further support for hosts
- Set up and co-ordinate 10 regional co-ordinators to help with workshops, advice and guidance and publicity at a more local level
- Produce a range of publicity material for host farmers including flyers, posters, postcards, road side banners and polo shirts
- Produce help and guidance such as a host farmers manual and activities booklet
- Generate media coverage by working with PR agency Ceres to run the national Open Farm Sunday press office
- Produce a promotional video featuring Jimmy Doherty to use in online promotion of Open Farm Sunday
- Provide the OFS website which included - a farmer registration page; 'Find a Farm' search facility; advice, information and downloadable event support material for host farmers



[www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)



## Get involved in Open Farm Sunday 2011!

Open Farm Sunday 2011 is on the 12th June. There are lots of ways to get involved:

- If you are a farmer, register your event at [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org) from the 1st January 2011, or help out at someone else's event.
- Help promote Open Farm Sunday and encourage other farmers to get involved, particularly those who have never done it before and need that extra bit of encouragement – word of mouth is the main way both visitors and farmers get to hear about it.
- Become a sponsor – no other initiative has such high regard in the industry and is so widely supported

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