

Fifth Open Farm Sunday a Fantastic Success!

Fantastic team work from farmers across the country, together with support from the food and farming industry and stakeholders, all contributed to make LEAF's fifth Open Farm Sunday (13th June) a great success.

Early indications show that 420 farms opened and that between them they welcomed approximately 150,000 visitors. Support for this annual event came from the highest level with Defra ministers Caroline Spelman, Secretary of State for Environment and Jim Paice, Food and Farming Minister also attending events.

Every year tens of thousands of people get great pleasure in visiting a farm. They come to simply enjoy the countryside or to learn more about where their food comes from.

In light of the E.Coli incident last year and in the preparation of the Griffin report, LEAF worked closely with farmers and relevant authorities in the run up to Open Farm Sunday, to make sure the day was fun, enjoyable and safe for everyone. LEAF ran a series of workshops up and down the country to prepare farmers for the big day, and one of their priorities was ensuring every farmer was aware of his obligations as far as providing hand-washing facilities, segregating eating areas and other health and safety issues.

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF, commented: "On behalf of the LEAF team I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved. We would like to thank all of the sponsors, in particular the principle sponsors; ASDA, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier, Morrisons, Love Food Hate Waste, Waitrose and Warburtons, for everything they did to make Open Farm Sunday 2010 a success. The principle sponsors of Open Farm Sunday supported in a number of ways, from radio days to in-store promotions and event support to hosting the online video. It was the backing from these organisations that showed how important Open Farm Sunday is to the food and farming industry in the ongoing effort to connect people with their food and the countryside.

"But of course the biggest thanks goes to the hundreds of farmers (and their families!) who either opened their farm gates or who supported friends and neighbours who did. So much energy and enthusiasm went into putting on events that the public truly enjoyed, according to the feedback we have received. What a great step towards helping people understand where their food comes from and how the countryside is cared for."

New for 2010, was an online video presented by farming champion Jimmy Doherty. The video, filmed at Jimmy's Farm in Ipswich, achieved coverage on a number of major online

media outlets including independent.co.uk, thesun.co.uk, goodtoknow.co.uk, jamieoliver.com, aol.co.uk, talktalk.co.uk, farmersguardian.com and fwi.co.uk.

LEAF also enlisted the help of ten regional coordinators for the first time this year, who each provided support to farmers preparing to open their farms. These coordinators also presented a series of 12 videos to form an online workshop, which was accessed through the Open Farm Sunday website and YouTube by farmers unable to attend the regional workshops held in March.

In the run up to the event, media interest on both a national and regional level was once again widespread. National coverage included The Archers – who actively participated in Open Farm Sunday, BBC Radio 4's Farming Today, The Telegraph Magazine and The Independent. Monthly magazines such as BBC Countryfile, BBC Good Food, Delicious, Practical Parenting, Prima and Psychologies also highlighted the event. Regional press and broadcast also covered the event in great detail, with some fantastic feature pieces on participating farms. Once again, the farming media have been great supporters and coverage was achieved in Farmers Weekly, Farmers Guardian, the NFU's British Farmer and Grower and Farm Business.

The date for Open Farm Sunday 2011 is Sunday 12th June – so put the date in your diary now! If you would like to get involved in the event next year, please contact the LEAF office on 02476 413 911.

- Ends –

Tell us all about your Open Farm Sunday event by filling out a feedback form online at www.farmsunday.org and by 'tweeting' us @openfarmsunday.

For further information and images, or to arrange an interview with a local farmer contact:

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Notes to editors:

- LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) www.leafuk.org is a national charity that helps farmers produce food with care for the environment, while working with their local community
- The fifth annual Open Farm Sunday on 13 June provides a great opportunity for the public to truly get to know how their food is produced and how the countryside around them is cared for
- Visitors will be able to learn from farmers themselves how natural plant and insect species are encouraged to thrive alongside crops, they will get a close-up look at

farm animals and see how the needs of wildlife are balanced with modern food production

- LEAF organises Open Farm Sunday and supports farmers with putting on an event that is not only enjoyable, but gives visitors a really fascinating insight into aspects of the countryside that they would not usually see or experience on an average day out
- LEAF supports both LEAF and non-LEAF member farmers by hosting a number of workshops across the country with practical advice and tips for organising successful events. LEAF also provides free promotional support materials and an interactive online event database to register details of farmer events
- Food carrying the LEAF Marque logo shows that it has been grown by farmers who are committed to looking after the countryside and the environment. LEAF farmers are subject to an independent LEAF Audit, designed to help them meet the change in demands placed on operations by legislation, the marketplace, community and the industry.
- An increasing number of farmers are signing up to support LEAF to demonstrate how they are integrating modern farming with environmental conservation
- Principal sponsors for Open Farm Sunday 2010 are: ASDA, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier, LEAF Marque, Love Food Hate Waste and Home Composting, Morrisons, National Grid, Natural England, Waitrose and Warburtons
- The additional sponsors are: DairyCo, Dairy Crest, EBLEX, HGCA, Marks and Spencer, NFU, GrowHow, Produce World, Soil Association, Duchy College, Farm Stay UK, Wiggly Wiggles.