

## Sixth Open Farm Sunday a success!



As thousands of people discovered life on Britain's farms, LEAF's Open Farm Sunday (June 12) has been declared a major success, despite some parts of the country receiving more than half an inch of rain that day. Feedback from farmers and visitors alike indicates that, once again, the fantastic commitment shown by the farming and food industry, resulted in a day that was as successful and enjoyable as ever.

Estimates show that 120,000 people visited one of the 362 farms that opened for the sixth Open Farm Sunday. Amongst the visitors were Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman and Farming Minister Jim Paice who visited LEAF farms that opened in Alcester and Ely, as Defra showed their support for the initiative.

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), commented: "This year was another successful Open Farm Sunday so well done to all who took part and made it happen. We really appreciate all the hard work that went in to each event. Our thanks go to the hundreds of farmers (and their friends, families and neighbours!) who either opened their farm gates or helped at an event.

"This year we saw a rise in the number of collaborative events where two or three farms supported each other. For example, farmers brought livestock from one unit to arable farms, while others provided tractor rides. Although it was a shame that the weather meant many farms didn't get the numbers they were expecting, other farms more than doubled their numbers, sometimes by a couple of thousand visitors!"

This year's campaign highlighted not only the work farmers do in producing our food, but also the work they carry out maintaining the countryside too. The online video led by BBC Countryfile presenter Adam Henson and filmed on his farm, explained the link between food, farming and nature and how farmers care for hedgerows and soil. The video achieved coverage on a number of major online media outlets including independent.co.uk, dailymail.co.uk, goodtoknow.co.uk, firstnews.co.uk, aol.co.uk, countryfile.com,

farmersguardian.com, fwi.co.uk and a host of regional news sites. A supporting news story which highlighted confusion over the countryside was also featured in the Daily Mail, Steve Wright's Radio 2 show and on ITV's This Morning.

In the run up to the event, media interest on both a national and regional level was once again widespread. National coverage included Radio 4's The Archers – who again wove Open Farm Sunday into their storyline in the weeks up to the 12<sup>th</sup> June. Additional coverage included features in the Sunday Telegraph and Daily Mirror in the week before Open Farm Sunday, as well as mentions on Radio Five Live and Chris Evan's Radio 2 Breakfast Show. Magazines such as Junior, Healthy, Yum, BBC Good Food, Delicious, Good Housekeeping, Best and My Weekly also highlighted the event. Regional press and broadcast media covered the event in great detail, with some fantastic feature pieces on participating farms. Open Farm Sunday's Twitter and Facebook accounts acted as a central hub for thousands of people who wished to talk about Open Farm Sunday and share their experiences and pictures on the day itself.

Caroline Drummond added: "We'd of course also like to say a big thank you to all our sponsors and supporters for everything they did to help make Open Farm Sunday 2011 such a success. As Open Farm Sunday goes from strength to strength we'd love to hear from anyone interested in sponsoring Open Farm Sunday 2012". Principle sponsors for 2011 were Asda, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, Natural England, National Farmers Union, Syngenta, Waitrose, and Warburtons.

As with previous year's, LEAF provided support for host farmers at all stages and again enlisted the help of a team of regional coordinators. Training workshops took place across the country in February and March, and were supported by online videos. LEAF also provided resource packs containing publicity material (posters, flyers, etc), suggested activities, Health and Safety guidance, polo shirts and lots more. Further advice was also available through the campaign website [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)

The date for Open Farm Sunday 2012 is Sunday 17 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](http://www.farmsunday.org) and by 'tweeting' us @openfarmsunday.

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**Editor's note:**

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org) is a national charity that helps farmers produce food with care for the environment, while working with their local community
- The sixth annual Open Farm Sunday on 12 June 2011 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 2011 are: ASDA, Defra, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, LEAF Marque, Natural England, National Farmers Union, Syngenta, Waitrose, Warburtons. Additional sponsors include: DairyCo, EBLEX, GrowHow, HGCA, M&S.