

Press Release – July 2014

Target media – trade covering food, farming, countryside

Countryside Classroom, building a brand new sector-wide educational resource

Countryside Classroom, a sector-wide collaboration, will promote learning both in the natural environment and in the classroom as it announces the development of a brand new online educational resource for anyone involved in the education of pupils across the curriculum. It will be launched in the spring of 2015.

The announcement came during National Countryside Week as HRH The Prince Of Wales accompanied thirty children from Steyning Primary School, Steyning, West Sussex who followed the journey of food from field to fork at Wiston House Estate. The children sourced their own produce to cook, met the farmer who rears the sheep and cooked with an expert chef before sitting down together to share the meal they produced.

Dan Corlett who is leading the *Countryside Classroom* initiative and is Chief Executive of Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) explained: “This was a very important day for the *Countryside Classroom* consortium, which has been working very hard for the past 12 months gathering momentum and industry support for this project. This event is a great example of how important it is to help the next generation learn more about food, farming and the countryside.”

HRH The Prince of Wales is an avid supporter of the British countryside and the welfare of those who live and work in it. So on the day, HRH The Prince of Wales was quick to get involved. He joined the children in digging up potatoes and in asking searching questions of the chef, farmer, gardener, forester and game-keeper, to understand how they work together to manage the countryside and produce food.

Lord Don Curry who chairs the consortium and helped bring together the organisations says: “*Countryside Classroom* is ultimately the vision of a partnership of organisations* which are extremely committed to working together to ensure that **all school children** leave school with vital experience, knowledge and a good understanding of food, farming and the countryside.”

The aim is to build a critical mass of organisations that by working together can become more effective in reaching children. To ensure *Countryside Classroom* delivers on the ground, three research projects were undertaken earlier this year. The results of these showed that teachers are overwhelmed by the options available, that awareness of materials is low and that they struggle to find quality, trusted resources.

Dan Corlett says: “With many organisations investing heavily in the area of educational resources, it is clear there is a need for an industry-wide joined up approach to provide teachers with a ‘one stop shop’ in this area. There is also widespread agreement that if children leave school having had the opportunity to learn in the natural environment and experience where their food comes from, it has long term benefits to society.”

The *Countryside Classroom* consortium currently exists with a working group of ten partner organisations and a further 25 supporting organisations taking part. The consortium will continue to bid for additional funding and drive support and membership in the run up to the launch in 2015.

For further information on how you can get involved please contact Dan Corlett at Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) on 0845 838 7192 or email dan@face-online.org.uk.

Ends

For further information, to arrange interviews or for supporting imagery/
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Editors notes:

***Countryside Classroom Partners:**

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB); Countryside Learning; Country Trust; Design and Technology Association (DATA); Farming and Countryside Education (FACE); Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF); Natural England; Royal Academy of Culinary Arts - Chefs Adopt a School; Royal Horticultural Society (RHS); School Food Plan.

Supporters include:

British Nutrition Foundation; Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC); Ernest Cook Trust; Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens; Food for Life Partnership; Garden Organic; LANDEX; Learning through Landscapes; Love British Food; National Farmers' Union; Red Tractor; Royal Highland Education Trust; School Food Matters; and Soil Association;