

**July 2015**

## **Record breaking Open Farm Sunday 2015 sees 40% visitor increase**

- 40% increase\* in Open Farm Sunday visitors
- 49% growth\* in the number of visitors from urban areas
- 40% increase\* in the number of people visiting a farm for the first time
- 80% of all visitors reported that they had learned something 'new' during Open Farm Sunday

\* Compared to 2014 data

The final visitor numbers for Open Farm Sunday 2015 have been announced by organisers LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) and show a tremendous 40% increase on 2014. A total of 291,000 people visited a farm for the campaign's 10th anniversary – 40,000 more than the original estimate.

Results from the visitor exit survey also showed a 40% increase in the number of people visiting a farm for the first time and a 49% growth in the number of visitors from urban areas compared with 2014 data. An impressive 80% of all visitors reported that they had learned something new during their Open Farm Sunday visit, with a significant number of visitors reporting a better understanding of the role of farmers in producing food and caring for the countryside. Following their Open Farm Sunday visit, 40% of all visitors rated their knowledge of the role of farmers as 'excellent'.

**Annabel Shackleton, Open Farm Sunday manager at LEAF** said: "A 40% increase in visitor numbers is a fantastic achievement. Open Farm Sunday galvanizes the whole farming industry and the huge growth in visitors is testimony to the hard work of the nearly 400 farmers who opened their farms, together with the support of thousands of helpers and all our sponsors. Open Farm Sunday plays a critical role in connecting consumers with farming and food. It provides a unique opportunity for everyone to visit a farm, talk to farmers and see how their food is produced. In essence, Open Farm Sunday helps to build consumer trust in the food they eat as well building greater understanding about the vital job farmers do to produce great food and manage our wonderful countryside sustainably. Plans for Open Farm Sunday 2016 are well underway to ensure this vital campaign continues to grow year on year."

Results from this year's communications campaign are also being evaluated. To date, there has been more than 1,100 pieces of coverage, including 30 pieces of national news referencing Open Farm Sunday and 850 regional articles. There was a 32% visitor increase to the campaign website in May and June, compared to the same period last year. For the first time in its history, Open Farm Sunday was trending nationally on Twitter with the hashtag #OFS15. The new campaign animations also helped spread the word about Open Farm Sunday and the work farmers do – achieving more than 20,000 views since they were launched in May. A final report on all results is being prepared and will be sent to all supporters and sponsors in the coming weeks.

Sponsors of Open Farm Sunday 2015 were: Aldi, Arla, Asda, BASF plc, Defra, Edge, Farmcare, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, National Farmers Union, Syngenta, The Tesco Eat Happy Project, Waitrose, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (from its BPEX, DairyCo, EBLEX, HGCA and HDC divisions) and QMS.

As well as Open Farm Sunday, over 6,000 children visited a farm in June for Open Farm School Days. Farms opened up for school visits to give children the opportunity to discover for themselves where their food comes from and how it is grown. LEAF are now in the third consecutive year of organising Open Farm School Days and continue to grow and build on the campaign.

Next year's Open Farm Sunday will take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016 with Open Farm School Days running throughout June. For more information visit: [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org) or follow [@openfarmsunday](https://twitter.com/openfarmsunday) on Twitter.

**-Ends-**

***For further information please contact:***

**David Gough**

Open Farm Sunday Press Office

T: 01189 475956

E: [openfarmsunday@ceres-pr.co.uk](mailto:openfarmsunday@ceres-pr.co.uk)

**Editor's note:**

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable farming and food. It works with farmers, the food industry, scientists and consumers to inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities. LEAF has organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (Registered charity no: [1045781](#))
- LEAF Marque is a farm assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. For more information visit [www.leafmarque.com](http://www.leafmarque.com)
- The tenth annual Open Farm Sunday took place on 7th June 2015. Open Farm Sunday provides a great opportunity for people to visit a farm to truly get to know how their food is produced and how the countryside around them is cared for. Over the past 10 years Open Farm Sunday has achieved so much:
  - Over 1,000 farmers have hosted events since the first Open Farm Sunday in 2006
  - 1.6million visitors have been to Open Farm Sunday events since 2006
  - This year 1 out of 5 visitors had never visited a farm before
  - 80% of visitors said that they learnt something new about farming
- Sponsors of Open Farm Sunday 2015 include: **Aldi, Arla, Asda, BASF plc, Defra, Farmcare, Farmers Weekly, Frontier Agriculture, John Deere, Kellogg's, LEAF Marque, Marks and Spencer, National Farmers Union, Syngenta, The Tesco Eat Happy Project, Waitrose plus the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (from its BPEX, DairyCo, EBLEX, HGCA and HDC divisions).**
- Next year's Open Farm Sunday will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016
- Alongside Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host Open Farm School Days which run throughout June. They provide thousands of school children with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced. For more information visit [www.farmschooldays.org](http://www.farmschooldays.org)
- Keep up to date with LEAF's activities via twitter [www.twitter.com/LEAF\\_Farming](http://www.twitter.com/LEAF_Farming) and our regular blogs at [leafmarque.wordpress.com](http://leafmarque.wordpress.com).