



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday 12 September 2018**

## **Teenagers Help Shape Future Direction for Industry Engagement**

**Over sixty teenagers from across the country came together today (12<sup>th</sup> September) to debate and discuss issues around farming and food production and help shape the future direction of how the industry engages with young people.**

LEAF Education's Teenager Engagement Day, held at the award-winning educational facility, The Farmschool in Harpenden, was attended by LEAF Honorary President, HRH The Countess of Wessex. The outcomes from the event will feed into a wider research study, supported by Rothamsted Research, exploring young people's views, beliefs and values in relation to food, farming and the countryside.

As LEAF Education looks to extend its outreach to teenagers, the event represents the first in a series of new and exciting initiatives aimed at understanding the way in which 12 to 18-year olds view food and farming and crucially, involving them as it formulates its future strategy and priorities.

During the day teenagers led and participated in discussion groups debating issues such as outdoor learning, health and wellbeing, communication, careers in agriculture and linking schools with farming. They were encouraged to explore ideas and identify options for potential LEAF Education activity. Teenagers were asked to present the main findings from their discussion groups, show videos they had created during the day and vote on the best ideas generated from each group.

Speaking at the event, Carl Edwards, Director, LEAF Education said: "Engaging young people in farming and food production is vitally important; both to the future of the agricultural industry as well as for their own health and wellbeing.

"Today's event was all about listening to teenagers, hearing their ideas, finding out what issues matter most to them and why they feel disconnected to farming and the outside world. It has been a truly inspiring day.

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“We have seen huge levels of engagement from everyone and been particularly impressed with their intelligent and imaginative ideas on how we, as an industry, can reach out to them more effectively. Young people represent our workforce and consumers of the future; they have a strong voice and clear opinions. Today is the first step in ensuring their voice is heard and that it helps define how farming becomes more relevant to the next generation.”

Professor Angela Karp, Director for Science Innovation, Engagement and Partnerships at Rothamsted Research, helped to shape the teenage research study. Today’s event took place just a few miles from the Harpenden-based research centre. Professor Karp said: “It has been so refreshing to hear directly from young people on the challenges we all face in producing sufficient, nutritious food for future generations and caring for our environment at the same time. Science and innovation can help to meet those challenges; whether in working with farmers to identify food and energy crops that will thrive as the world warms; helping us to understand soil health or in weighing-up the trade-offs that come with different farming systems. These are all central discussions that need to involve not only scientists, farmers and industry, but the next generation for whom these issues will become most pressing. We look forward to more of the lively and exciting conversations we’ve seen today as we continue this dialogue so vital to all our futures.”

LEAF Education will now work with the facilitator students from Brockhill Park School to analyse the outputs from today’s Teenager Engagement Day; combined with the results of a wider research study, supported by Rothamsted Research, involving an omnibus survey carried out amongst 12 to 18 year-olds – to shape future outreach activity. The research findings will be revealed and presented alongside an outline of forthcoming LEAF Education activity at the LEAF Education and Public Engagement conference on 16<sup>th</sup> October, held at Rothamsted Research.

## ENDS

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### **Editors Notes**

- Students and teachers from six schools were involved in the **LEAF Education Teenager Engagement Day – Brockhill Park School**, Kent; **Ibstock Community College**, Leicestershire; **Sir John Lawes**, Hertfordshire; **St Albans Girls School**, Hertfordshire; **Onslow St Audrey’s School**, Hertfordshire; **Parmiter’s School**, Hertfordshire

- **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)** is a leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. LEAF 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 promotes Integrated Farm Management (IFM)**, a whole farm business approach that uses the best of modern technology and traditional methods to deliver more sustainable farming. IFM is made up of nine sections, which together address the entire farm business. These include soil and water management, pollution control, crop health and protection, animal welfare, community engagement, energy efficiency and landscape and nature conservation.
- **The LEAF Marque** is a leading global assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. It is underpinned by the sustainable farming principles of IFM. **LEAF Marque** certified businesses are independently verified against the LEAF Marque Standard.
- The LEAF Network includes **LEAF Demonstration Farms** – commercial farms in England and Scotland, which show the beneficial practices of IFM to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. The LEAF Network also includes **LEAF Innovation Centres** – research organisations from across the UK whose work supports the research, evidence, development and promotion of IFM.
- **LEAF Education** builds on the work of FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) following its merger with LEAF in July 2017. It works to inspire future generations about farming, food and the countryside. It manages a number of industry and educational initiatives, including Access to Farms, CEVAS (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme), Countryside Classroom, Chef on the Farm and LEAF Open Farm School Days. **LEAF Education** provides teachers with curriculum focused training, tools and resources to help them deliver high-quality learning experiences about farming. It also helps farmers navigate the world of education and supports them in delivering inspiring and engaging on-farm and in-classroom activities.
- **LEAF** manages **Open Farm Sunday**, the farming industry's annual open day when farmers open their gates and welcome people onto their farms to discover the world of farming. Alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host **LEAF Open Farm School Days** which run throughout June. They provide thousands of schoolchildren with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.

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[www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org) LEAF is a registered charity (No. 1045781) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No. 3035047).

## About Rothamsted Research

Rothamsted Research is the longest-running agricultural research institute in the world. We work from gene to field with a proud history of ground-breaking discoveries, from crop treatment to crop protection, from statistical interpretation to soils management. Our founders, in 1843, were the pioneers of modern agriculture, and we are known for our imaginative science and our collaborative influence on fresh thinking and farming practices.

Through independent science and innovation, we make significant contributions to improving agri-food systems in the UK and internationally. In terms of the institute's economic contribution, the cumulative impact of our work in the UK was calculated to exceed £3000 million a year in 2015<sup>1</sup>.

Our strength lies in our systems approach, which combines science and strategic research, interdisciplinary teams and partnerships. Rothamsted is also home to three unique resources. These National Capabilities are open to researchers from all over the world: [The Long-Term Experiments](#), [Rothamsted Insect Survey](#) and the [North Wyke Farm Platform](#).

We are strategically funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), with additional support from other national and international funding streams, and from industry.

We are also supported by the Lawes Agricultural Trust (LAT). For more information, visit <https://www.rothamsted.ac.uk/>; Twitter [@Rothamsted](#)

<sup>1</sup>[Rothamsted Research and the Value of Excellence: A synthesis of the available evidence](#), by Séan Rickard (Oct 2015)

### **About BBSRC**

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council is part of UK Research and Innovation, a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government. BBSRC invests in world-class bioscience research and training on behalf of the UK public. Our aim is to further scientific knowledge, to promote economic growth, wealth and job creation and to improve quality of life in the UK and beyond. Funded by government, BBSRC invested £469 million in world-class bioscience in 2016-17. We support research and training in universities and strategically funded institutes. BBSRC research and the people we fund are helping society to meet major challenges, including food security, green energy and healthier, longer lives. Our investments underpin important UK economic sectors, such as farming, food, industrial biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

More information about [BBSRC](#), our science and our impact.

More information about [BBSRC strategically funded institutes](#).