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# LEAF Teenage Years Engagement Survey

## Summary of findings

October 2018

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With thanks to Rothamsted Research  
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## Why now?

- Many people from the farming and food sectors have long neglected working with secondary schools and their students.
- There is a shortage of young people coming in to an industry that has many opportunities available to young people, but these opportunities are not communicated well.
- Evidence\* suggests that young people will associate themselves much more with 'food tribes' than with other, more traditional social groups (such as music). These include: gym, protein and nutrition, vegans, vegetarians, flexitarians, craft food and drinks etc.

\*YouthSight - Millennials, Gen Z and Food: Trends and Truth (2017)

## What Were Our Research Objectives?

- To gain a greater understanding of the way in which 12-18 year olds view food and farming.
- To be able to engage with a future generation, to enable them to make informed future choices.
- To ensure that we (as an industry) listen to our future generation and empower them to lead in the development of five collaborative projects for LEAF Education to lead on with this age group in 2019.
- To help formulate communications and a wider education strategy going forwards for the farming and food industry.

**To do this we questioned over 1,000 12-18 year olds across the UK in June 2018**

## Summary of key findings

While the majority agree that young people should be more interested in how food is produced, overall it seems that teenagers have a limited view of what food and farming involves. This is then reflected in how many are interested in a career in the sector, although it also appears that the majority have had little information on what is available. Nearly two-thirds believe farming is all about long hours and acknowledge it involves hard work and around a quarter see it as a well-paid and rewarding career.

Unsurprisingly for this age group, the majority think it is important that farmers should consider the environment and almost half say that farmers should make sure what they do is sustainable. There is a clear interest in the science involved in food and farming amongst the respondents – which increases incrementally in terms of age – possibly as a reflection of the topics they have covered in school?

15% of respondents stated they were vegetarian. Despite the apparent trend towards veganism (4%), more respondents were pescatarian (5%) and the majority were omnivores (72%); over 40% stated we need to all eat less meat.

When it comes to finding out more, one in five want to know more about what farmers do and the majority would go online to do this. Facebook and Pinterest are not channels favoured by this age group, who are more likely to be on Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube - which reflects their preference of video as a means of reaching and engaging them.

Despite the rise of many new younger bloggers, vloggers and celebrities, this age group connects strongly with 'older' faces like Jamie Oliver as people who promote food and farming.

**Overall the results indicate that there is a clear opportunity to change perceptions of young people with regard to food and farming, to both drive a greater interest in the sector as a career option and to educate them overall as to what modern farming is all about.**

## Key findings

- A total of 35% of teenagers are either interested in the work farmers do or would like to find out more.
- Almost a third (32%) of respondents would consider a career in farming, yet only 22% have ever been given information about jobs in food or farming.
- Long hours and hard work are the phrases most commonly associated with a career in farming.
- Working with animals was the most popular as a career option with being a chef also one of the more popular.
- 87% agree that young people should be more interested in how food is produced and where it comes from.
- 86% of teenagers would search online or take to social media to find out more about farming – Snapchat, followed by YouTube, are their preferred channels.
- Nearly 89% say social media is either very important or important to them and they use it several times a day (63%) or once a day (25%).
- A short (30-second) video is teenagers' preferred format of online content.
- Jamie Oliver remains a key influencer – 59% of respondents associate him with food and farming. Interestingly, almost a quarter (24%) don't know anyone who promotes food and farming.
- Over a third of respondents thought that soil sensors (34%) and industrial crops (35%) were key innovations that we should see/see more of on future farms.
- Three quarters (75%) think science and innovation will underpin a sustainable future for farming and food.

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