



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED TO 11:30am Tuesday 16th October 2018**

### **Teenagers Talk Farming**

#### **New Research Shapes Way Forward to Engage Young People with Farming**

An extensive programme of pioneering research to encourage better teenager engagement is helping the farming industry define how it becomes more relevant to the next generation, addressing the issues they care about and igniting their interest in the sector's career opportunities.

The twelve-month research programme, commissioned by LEAF Education and supported by Rothamsted Research, comprised a survey of over 1,000 12 to 18-year olds across the UK and interviews with 60 teenagers at a Teenager Empowerment event, attended by LEAF's Honorary President, HRH The Countess of Wessex last month. The outcomes of the research will help shape new strategies and priorities for the food and farming industry to more effectively connect with young people.

Speaking about the importance of this work at the Teenager Empowerment event, HRH The Countess of Wessex said:

"Young people are shaping their futures and I think we ignore them at our peril. We really must engage and we must do it now in order that we can reap the benefits soon."

#### **Teenager research revealed:**

- 35% of young people would consider a career in food and farming, but only 22% have received relevant careers information.
- 65% would look online and 20% on social media to find out more about farming.
- 35% believe strongly that science and innovation will underpin a sustainable future for farming.

- 41% strongly agreed that young people should be more interested in how food is produced and where food comes from.
- 42% said that short (30 second) videos were the preferred choice for content.

The research revealed that despite teenagers feeling disconnected to farming and having limited understanding of what it delivers, many of today's young people are interested in how their food is produced and the work farmers do. In particular, they hold strong views around the environmental impact of farming and, furthermore, they would like to know more about career opportunities available in the sector.

Not surprisingly, when it comes to finding out more, teenagers are turning to social media, specifically, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube as their preferred channel and still identify with 'older' food celebrities, such as Jamie Oliver, but there is also an increase in young bloggers, vloggers and chefs.

Following the outcomes of the research programme, a new road-map for teenager outreach is being drawn up by LEAF Education in consultation with the agri-food industry, based on five key priority themes:

- **Outdoor Inspiration**
- **Community Hub**
- **Fit for Life**
- **Farming Futures and Careers**
- **Let's Connect**

Carl Edwards, Director, LEAF Education explained:

“Engaging young people in farming and food production is vital to the future of the agricultural industry as well as for their own health and wellbeing. We know that strengthening that connection can help promote healthier lifestyles and nurture a lifelong interest in the natural world, helping to build a sense of their own personal responsibility in protecting it.

Over the past year, we have led a pioneering research programme, which has put teenagers at its very heart. We have listened to their views and concerns, learnt about the issues that matter most to them, gained fresh perspectives and involved them directly in developing strategies to help transform the way the agricultural sector communicates with them and, crucially, addresses their needs and concerns.”

Professor Angela Karp, Director for Science Innovation, Engagement and Partnerships at Rothamsted Research, who helped shape the teenager research study added:

“Today’s teenagers are the farmers, consumers and scientists of tomorrow, and what they think about farming will have a huge impact on the wider industry over the coming years, including implications for the future of research institutions such as Rothamsted.

“This research will allow Rothamsted and other organisations in the agricultural sector to improve the ways they engage with young people about where food comes from and how it is produced.”

Carl Edwards concluded:

“Based on the outcomes of the research programme we are now working with our partners across the food, farming and education sectors, to develop a number of projects and initiatives based around the five key priority areas, which we will launch next year – during Defra’s Year of Green Action. Young people are our future and we are determined to give them a voice in defining how *their* food and farming industry can become more relevant to them – whether that be through addressing sustainability issues, concerns around health and wellbeing, protecting the environment or opening their eyes to future career opportunities.”

The results of the research programme were shared at LEAF Education’s annual conference held on Tuesday 16th October and entitled ‘*Engaging Teenagers with Farming: Listening. Learning Leading*’. Speakers included: Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive; Carl Edwards, Director, LEAF Education and Angela Karp, Rothamsted Research, Jane Craigie, Jane Craigie Marketing; Tom Martin, Village Farm, Iain Clarke, Llysfasi College; Robbie Kirkman, Eden Project; Thomas Doris, Mid-Ulster Youth Parliament, plus Jemima Pearce and

students from Brockhill Park school, who have been involved in the project throughout facilitating discussions and outlining key priorities and recommendations which have come out of this research programme.

A summary of the survey results can be found out <https://bit.ly/2COH7vQ>

**For more information, an interview or images, please contact:**

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**Editors Notes**

- **About the research:** In June 2018, working in collaboration with Rothamsted Research, LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) commissioned independent research which was carried out by Mortar and secured responses from 1121 young people aged 12 to 18 years across the UK in both urban and rural areas. The results were analysed by LEAF, Rothamsted and teenagers at Brockhill Park Performing Arts College, and the students drew out key themes. These themes formed the basis for discussions and interviews, facilitated by Brockhill Park students, with 60 students at the **LEAF Education Teenager Empowerment Day**, held at The Farmschool, Harpenden on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The 60 students came from six schools – **Brockhill Park Performing Arts College**, 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 FaceTime a Farmer, 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.

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