

Thursday 6th July 2017

LEAF Demonstration Farm receives Royal Visit

HRH The Countess of Wessex visits Overbury

On Wednesday 5th July, HRH The Countess of Wessex, visited Overbury Enterprises, a LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) Demonstration Farm, near Tewkesbury in Worcestershire/Gloucestershire.

The Countess, who became LEAF's Honorary President last year, toured the farm and estate. Her Royal Highness met LEAF trustees, LEAF Demonstration Farmers and staff, as well as representatives from Overbury Enterprises. The visit enabled the Countess to see first-hand how LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM) principles are helping to deliver more sustainable farming.

The Countess was welcomed to Overbury by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE, Penelope Bossom, Overbury Enterprises Managing Partner, LEAF Chairman, Stephen Fell, and LEAF Chief Executive, Caroline Drummond. During the visit HRH spent time with Jake Freestone, Farm Manager at Overbury Enterprises and other LEAF Demonstration Farmers, learning how they are implementing IFM on their businesses, their work around knowledge exchange and how LEAF Marque certification helps them communicate their sustainable farming credentials to the public. The Countess also spoke to LEAF Open Farm Sunday Manager, Annabel Shackleton and host farmer Michael Sly, about the importance of providing more opportunities for the public to engage with farming.

Overbury Enterprises grows a range of crops including wheat, barley, oil seed rape, as well as running a 1,200 strong sheep flock. The farm was awarded LEAF Marque accreditation in 2007. The Countess of Wessex also visited the orchard and saw the children from Grasshopper's pre-school nursery, gaining an insight into Overbury Enterprise's role as a LEAF



Demonstration Farm in showcasing sustainable farming to other farmers as well as to schools and a wide range of community groups.

To commemorate her visit to Overbury Enterprises, The Countess unveiled a plaque next to a Worcester Black Pear tree in the orchard. Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive said: “Since her appointment as LEAF Honorary president in October last year, The Countess of Wessex has shown a passionate commitment to the work LEAF does in developing and promoting more sustainable farming, including recently visiting another of our Demonstration Farms for Open Farm Sunday. We were delighted that HRH was able to spend time here today at Overbury Enterprises to get an insight into how LEAF works in practice. The Countess has seen some of the inspiring and progressive work being carried out and heard from LEAF Demonstration Farmers themselves about their drive and determination to deliver more sustainable farming and critically, to reach out to the general public to fanfare what they do. We look forward to continuing to promote our vital work in championing more sustainable methods of food production and growing our public outreach activities.”

For more information on LEAF, the LEAF Network, IFM and the LEAF Marque please visit www.leafuk.org

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For more

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LEAF Editors' Notes:

- **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)** is the 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 delivers more sustainable farming. IFM uses the best of modern technology and traditional methods to deliver prosperous farming that enriches the environment and engages local communities.
- **The LEAF Marque** is an environmental assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. It is based on the sustainable farming principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM),



which covers areas such as soil and water management, pollution control, crop health, animal welfare, community engagement, energy efficiency and landscape and nature conservation. LEAF Marque businesses are independently assessed and certified against the principles of IFM.

LEAF Demonstration Farms are commercial farms which show the beneficial practices of IFM to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM in order to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. The network of LEAF Demonstration Farms includes a range of farm businesses across England and Scotland. They work alongside the LEAF Innovation Centres.

- **Overbury Estate**, part of Overbury Enterprises is a 1,539 hectare arable and sheep enterprise set within the Cotswold AONB on the historic slopes of Bredon Hill on the Worcestershire / Gloucestershire border. The Estate has a long tradition of farming to the highest standards of environmental stewardship combining the best of traditional farming with modern technology to produce quality crops and healthy animals. Overbury Estate joined LEAF in 2003, became LEAF Marque certified in 2007 and were launched as a LEAF Demonstration Farm in 2012.