



An update on the current LEAF Education and Public Engagement Activity:

Farming Fortnight

Managed by LEAF Education and developed in partnership with Brockhill Park Performing Arts College in Kent, Farming Fortnight (1 – 12 June 2020), saw children, whether they are being taught at home or in school, be inspired about farming. The campaign brought to life what farming delivers in terms of food production and addressed issues around climate change. The fortnight focus also highlighted the many and varied career opportunities available in the agricultural sector.

This year we were also supported by Adam Henson and featured on Countryfile. A wide range of engaging and informative learning resources were available for parents and teachers to access via the Countryside Classroom on-line portal. These included videos, topic sheets, lesson plans and case studies – all aimed at bringing the world of farming closer to children. Each day of the campaign had its own farming theme and accompanying social media hashtag – ranging from arable farming (#TractorTuesday), the sheep industry (#WoollyWednesday) through to fruit and vegetable production (#TastyTuesday) to careers in farming (#FutureFarming). Parents and teachers were encouraged to share their learning experiences on social media.

- Throughout Farming Fortnight, we had over 39,845 page views directly on the Farming Fortnight pages and resources on Countryside Classroom. An increase of over x10 from 2019.
- 19,000 individual users directly on to the Countryside Classroom Farming Fortnight pages. This had a subsequent positive impact on the main Countryside Classroom page peaking at 7,5000 users to the webpage during #WoollyWednesday.
- On Facebook we reached over 120,000 users – which shared Farming Fortnight in numerous parent and teacher groups.

Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)

ELMS is intended by Defra as the system by which ‘payment for public goods’ fully replaces the Basic Payment and Countryside Stewardship Schemes for farmers by 2028. LEAF is involved in four of the first round of “test and trials”, one of which is concerned with the levers needed for high quality educational access.

We are utilising the pre-existing and a successful Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS) developed by the Access to Farmers Partnership) and have trained an initial ten farmers. We are proud that CEVAS delivers training across the plethora of outdoor learning, not just on farm, but woodland and parkland settings too, which is why it is so versatile and successful in its approach. It ensures that those who attend understand the Industry Code of Practice: Preventing and Controlling Ill Health from animal contact. Additionally, it looks at how to ensure visits/opportunities are provide for a wide variety of ages, groups and abilities.

We have also been working with The Country Trust on an amendment to the Agriculture Bill. The amendment will be tabled by Lord Curry a long-time supporter and friend of LEAF Education and the catalyst for the successful Countryside Classroom Partnership. As previously developed by The



Country Trust with our signatory support last year, it has been proposed amending Agriculture Bill. Part 1, section 1 (b) which currently states: supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment;

to:

(b) supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland increasing understanding, knowledge and skills relating to the environment, farming, food production, and the impact of climate change on agriculture;

Supporting statement

“This amendment allows the Secretary of State to provide specific financial assistance for the work of furthering understanding, knowledge and skills. It differentiates the ‘public good’ resulting from educating and engaging people from that which arises from supporting public access and enjoyment.”

We completely agree with The Country Trust that countryside, food, farming and climate change education is woefully absent from the new Agriculture Bill. And the phrase ‘better understanding of the environment’ does not articulate the necessity and importance of educating the public about food, farming, climate change and the countryside.

In addition, we are talking to wider partners around our discussion and ask around future ELMS payments. We are working on seeing that ‘educational access’ payments are seen within tier one and tier two of the new three tier system to maximise the positive impact that this will have on young people, moving forward what might have been seen as a nice to do is becoming ever increasingly a need to do – whether this be supportive of environmental understanding and engagement, physical and mental health benefits or a genuine passions and desire in our future generations to be more actively involved in the direction of our natural capital. We would hope to see that funding is also available not just as capital investment but also training and support providing sensible, practical and proportionate guidance to ensure safe, high quality educational visits and experiences.

We are also working across sector, with our wider partnership of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom – where there is already support from the Department for Education for schools to look for the Quality Badge – this already includes CEVAS training as part requirement for the Quality badge.

LEAF Online Farm Sunday

Against a backdrop of stunning British countryside, consumers were invited to join farmers from Cornwall to the Isle of Arran and Northamptonshire to Pembrokeshire broadcasting live on the LEAF Open Farm Sunday Facebook page – with a new farmer going live each hour from 8am – 8pm. Each virtual tour was different and every farm had something special to offer.



Over the course of the event, videos on the LEAF Open Farm Sunday Facebook page were viewed 118k times – equating to 54 days’ worth (or 77k minutes!) of video viewed. Consumers had the chance to interact and ask farmers questions.

The tours included insights into what crops are used for – including the unexpected such as wheat being a contributor to intravenous drips! Farmers explained what and how cows eat, why good soil is vital to all the crops, how many kilometres of hedgerows have been planted and why that matters to the wildlife that live there. All videos are still available to watch on the LEAF Open Farm Facebook page.

Countryside Classroom – Home Education Hub

While the great majority of children have not been attending school, we felt the Countryside Classroom partnership (of which LEAF Education is the lead organisation) had much to offer home educators. We decided to adapt some of our existing resources for home educators and devised a plan to promote these together with resources from other Countryside Classroom partners.

Through the networks we have engaged an average of 20,000 users per week. All resources can be found here: <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/home-education>

Farmer Time

Although Farmer Time has not actively been pairing teachers and farmers whilst home schooling and lockdown measures are in place, some established partnerships have adapted with innovative ways to bring a little of the farm into the pupils’ homes.

Miss Berry from Washingborough Academy, and farmer Christopher Foster are a prime example of this. They have developed a system whereby the farmer sends in video footage to Miss Berry, who then shares these videos over secure pages on social media that her class have access to.

“Farmer Time is honestly one of the most rewarding experiences. The children (and staff) are gaining so much knowledge around farming and food in a fun and interactive way.” (Miss Berry)

Internationally, Finland have launched their first year running Farmer Time, and have got off to a good start, with great interest from both farmers and schools.

Farmer Time is a great initiative for both schools and farmers, and incredibly rewarding with 100% of teachers and farmers recommending this to others!! Active pairings will restart in September.

Virtual #FarmMyFood

As some of you will already be aware (thanks to your support) in 2019, hundreds of Business and Food students took part in #FarmMyFood; a farm visit and activity day with curriculum linked workshops, demonstrations, farm tour, group activities and careers advice. Due to the impact of Covid19 in 2020, a virtual version has been developed; including information, films, curriculum links, and tasks. It will help students understand how food and farming is relevant to their subject, and hopefully a desire to bring their learning to life on a real #FarmMyFood visit in the future. We know that 60 schools have already been interested and will take part in the virtual version this year. A new date will be confirmed for a physical #FarmMyFood event.



Resources

Careers focused – independent learning for schools, in light of no direct delivery in the current situation. <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1436>

Online Teacher Training Workshop – how to deliver farm visits linked to curriculum learning, delivered through a number of Universities including UEA. <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1441>

Conscious Consumer – Activities designed for the PSHE curriculum, but explore topical issues that span boundaries of agriculture, food and society which link closely to Geography, Science, and Food Preparation & Nutrition. They can be completed independently or in school. <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1445>

How to plan safe farm visits – A handbook for teachers, covering all the essential aspects of organising school farm visits; from what to include in a risk assessment, to linking visits to the curriculum. There is also information on the types of farms offering visits as well as what to look for on a pre-visit. <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1416>

We are of course developing further our national strategy around engaging further the teenage audience – this follows up on our [LEAF Teenager Years Engagement Survey \(National\)](#) which was launched in October 2018. The final report can be found [here](#). And continue to engage with industry to consider this portion of our society as key for highlight the opportunities we can offer them.

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