LEAF prepares for Covid-secure Open Farm Sunday

Five new ambassadors will work alongside three former coordinators to help farmers planning to open doors to public this summer

LEAF has appointed eight ambassadors to support farmers taking part in this year’s Open Farm Sunday.

For its 2021 edition, LOFS is focusing on hosting small, socially distanced farm walks and talks to provide an intimate insight into what happens on a farm.

LOFS manager Annabel Shackleton said: “This year we are seeing more people spending time in the great outdoors and cooking from scratch, and there is a genuine interest across society to learn about where food comes from, the work farmers do and how the countryside is managed.

“With staycations and trips to the countryside increasing, we anticipate there will be more people than ever wanting to visit a farm this summer, and we want to encourage as many farmers as possible to get involved with the confidence they can manage their events.

Each with a background in agriculture, the ambassadors’ role is to encourage and support farmers looking to open their doors. They will share ideas to engage visitors and give practical information on how to implement social distancing.

As well as being on hand to speak one-to-one with farmers, co-ordinating regional groups and presenting at events, ambassadors are recording a series of short videos to help with the planning of a LEAF Open Farm Sunday event.

Topics covered include how to create a hand-washing station, using a ticketing system to manage the number and flow of visitors through to communications support and creative activity ideas. These will be available on the LEAF website alongside a range of other free resources.

Five new ambassadors will be working on the event alongside three former coordinators who have each been involved for more than five years, hosting their own farm visits.

The new appointments are:

- Anne Mair-Chapman (North East England) farms with her family in North Northumberland, including Suffolk and Blue Texel Sheep

- Jon Myhill (East) is a crop-consultant, specialising in energy and forage, and director of MB Farming, a contracting business in Norfolk and Suffolk.

- Molly Biddell (South) supports her family-run diversified estate in Surrey as well as working as a policy analyst in the Savills Rural Research team.

- Rona Amiss (South West) is a first generation, tenanted farmer on the most southerly point of mainland UK and Britain’s favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895
safely.”

- Helen Chappell (North West) runs a traditional mixed dairy and arable farm that has been in the family for seven generations.

They join existing coordinators Andy Guy (Midlands), Jamie McCoy (Wales) and Rebecca Dawes (Scotland).

The ambassadors will be hosting three online farmer meetings open to anyone interested in taking part in LOFS, or any experienced hosts looking for new ideas.

During the short one-hour zoom call, there will be an opportunity to meet some of the new ambassadors, listen to their top tips, answer questions, shares ideas and speak to hosts.

The ‘LEAF Open Farm Sunday Top Tip’ sessions will take place on:

- Monday 10 May, 7.30-8.30pm
- Wednesday 12 May, 12.30-1.30pm
- Friday 14 May, 8-9am

To find out more about the ambassadors or register to host an event, visit www.farmsunday.org

Enjoyed this free article from Fresh Produce Journal and its team of editors? Don’t miss out on even more in-depth analysis, plus all the latest news from the fresh produce business. Subscribe now to Fresh Produce Journal.