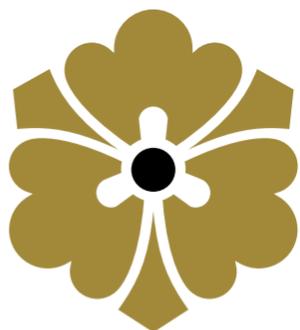


# WHO'D BE A FARMER TODAY?

[ Quite a few of us, actually. But  
not all is rosy down on the farm ]



THE PRINCE'S  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

# In support of our farmers

From unpredictable weather to falling prices and political upheaval, farmers face many challenges, says The Prince's Countryside Fund ambassador Jimmy Doherty. What can we do to help?



PhD student turned pig farmer Jimmy Doherty transformed a derelict farm into a thriving business. Today, he is the President of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and a TV presenter.

I'm proud to be a farmer. British farmers put food on the nation's table. They keep rural economies thriving, allowing people to live in countryside communities that are vibrant and supportive. They manage the landscape, so that out-of-town areas are not only beautiful to the eye but welcoming to wildlife. They do this for the most part because they wouldn't want to do anything else. Yes, many are born into the profession, but they wouldn't swap the outdoor life, the connection with the countryside and the satisfaction of a job well done for the simplicity of the nine-to-five. But not all is rosy on the nation's farms. Many farmers are under real pressure from falling prices for their produce. This is forcing some into debt that they are struggling to repay. Not unreasonably, perhaps, this is causing young people who would otherwise be keen on farming to re-evaluate whether they are prepared to take on all the stress and struggle that comes with a career in agriculture. Any profession needs the regular impetus of new entrants if it is to thrive, so this threatens to impact upon the future vibrancy and energy of our industry. The Prince's Countryside Fund was set up in 2010 to support our farmers and rural communities in the face of such challenges. Through its work on The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme, it has enabled hundreds of farm businesses across the UK to access the support and advice they need to see them through difficult times.

It provides grants to grassroots organisations to strengthen countryside communities as well as to young entrants into the profession to support them in their training. When they asked me if I wanted to represent them as one of their ambassadors, I was honoured to accept.

It is to understand how the nation's farmers feel about the challenges they are facing – and to what extent these challenges are appreciated by the public – that The Prince's Countryside Fund has carried out some valuable research. First, they asked our farmers a few simple questions. What do they enjoy most about being a farmer? What would you want to do if you weren't a farmer? Do you think family farms as we know them will survive? Then they asked the public to share their impressions of farmers and farming. What are the biggest issues facing farmers today? How much do farmers do to look after the countryside? How much are they paid? And would any of us want to give up our day job for a life as a farmer?

The answers make for revealing reading. How we choose to interpret these answers – how we act upon them to forge a robust, fit-for-purpose farming sector that responds to the many challenges we face today – will define our society throughout the 21st century. It will also determine the place within that society of the hard-working, dedicated and talented individuals who toil to put food on our plates.

**“British farmers put food on the nation's table and keep rural communities thriving. They also manage the landscape to make the countryside beautiful to the eye and welcoming to wildlife”**

## THE FACTS & FIGURES

In March 2016, The Prince's Countryside Fund carried out research to determine the challenges facing family farms in Britain today, and the perception the British public has of the state of British farming in general. Widespread OnePoll consumer research was conducted with 2,000 people on their understanding of farming in Britain in 2017. Simultaneous research was conducted by the National Farm Research Unit on a sample of 300 British family farmers to determine whether they think the public understands the pressures they face.

FOR INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT AND THE ROLE THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND PLAYS TO IMPROVE FAMILY FARM BUSINESSES AND THE QUALITY OF RURAL LIFE, VISIT [PRINCESCOUNTRYSIDEFUND.ORG.UK](http://PRINCESCOUNTRYSIDEFUND.ORG.UK)

## ALSO FEATURED IN THIS REPORT

**WE TALK TO BRITISH FARMERS TO DISCUSS THE CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS STORIES IN FARMING**

PAGE 7 **JACK HANSON, 25, EXPLAINS WHY HIS CAREER IN FARMING IS SO REWARDING**

PAGE 10 **TWO GENERATIONS FROM ONE FAMILY SHARE HOW INNOVATION HAS MADE THEIR FARM PROSPER**

PAGE 12 **A FARMING COUPLE DEMONSTRATE HOW DIVERSIFICATION HELPED SAVE THEIR SMALLHOLDING**



## THE CHANGING FACE OF FARMING: 100 YEARS IN BRITAIN'S FIELDS

# LIVING THE DREAM

What the public thinks farming life is like and the day-to-day experience of farmers is very different. Despite the hardships of the profession, most love their job. But if forced to switch careers, their choices make interesting reading...



We love the idea of working the land, it seems, but do we understand the reality? A quarter of those surveyed said they'd give up their day job to become a farmer. This pull is strongest among the young, with 31% hankering after a farming life. And while we might presume a farmer's life is most strongly desired by those living among the noise and grime of built-up areas, the opposite is true. Only 23% of city- and suburb-dwellers fancied working on a farm, compared with 32% of their country cousins.

But maybe our enthusiasm would be tempered if we knew how much farmers earn. Some 44% of us think they bring in more than £30,000 a year. However, according to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), in 2015, average incomes for UK farms fell below £20,000 for the first time since 2007.

Many farmers believe the public has an unduly rosy view of their profession. When asked how keen they would be to encourage a member of the public to work on a farm, even those who welcomed the idea felt obliged to add a note of caution. "We need young people coming into farming but they have to be really keen to do it, otherwise it won't work" was a typical comment.

Among those farmers who thought encouraging the public to work on a farm was a bad idea, the comments were even more cautionary. "They need to have a very good attitude to be able to stick at it," said one respondent. "Even farmers' sons are leaving as they see easier money to be found elsewhere."

Indeed, the lack of remuneration was a recurring theme from our surveyed farmers. "If they have the money to succeed in farming, then I wouldn't discourage them," said one. "But it's such a hard industry, and if you have no money there is absolutely no point. You have to have a profit."

So, given the financial instability, long hours and hard work, what do farmers want to do? Well, farm. When they were asked which job they fancied, farming came out top at 35%, with a further 8% choosing ancillary trades such as farm contractor or estate manager. No other profession scored double figures. At the time of writing, the farmer who said he wanted to be a professional golfer has yet to switch career.

### WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

**“There has to be more publicity about how farms work. The public don't know the reality. It needs to be shown on TV, then we'll see how many people will want to come into farming from towns and cities”**

ANONYMOUS RESPONDENT TO FARMERS' SURVEY

**“While the way of life may be envied, the income will not – the turnover of a 250-ewe flock is less than the average national wage, and that is before any costs are taken into account”**

ROBIN MILTON, EXMOOR SHEEP FARMER

**“In my four years as a farmer, what makes me happiest is being a part of the wider community. It's the best industry in the world! The support I've received from farmers willing to share their expertise to give me my own little foothold in a global industry will never be forgotten”**

JB GILL, KENT-BASED MUSICIAN (FORMER MEMBER OF JLS) TURNED FARMER

**“We all have this dream, don't we? Living in the countryside where everything is picturesque. But it's not until you start to live it that you realise how little you know about boring but important things like hedges, drains and ditches... the stuff that makes the farm work”**

COLIN HODGKINSON, SALES REP TURNED FARMER AND PRODUCER OF STAFFORDSHIRE SAVOURY EGGS

THE NATIONAL MEDIAN INCOME IS **£28,200\*** FARMERS EARN **£20,000** A YEAR ON AVERAGE – YET MORE THAN

**60%** OF RESPONDENTS THOUGHT THEY TOOK HOME MORE

NEARLY **10%** ESTIMATED FARMERS' SALARIES TO BE OVER **£75,000**

**50%** OF UK FARMS NO LONGER MAKE A LIVING FROM FARMING ALONE

BUT IN SPITE OF THE CHALLENGES INVOLVED, WHEN ASKED WHICH JOB THEY WOULD REALLY LIKE TO DO,

**35%** OF FARMERS SAID FARMING

## WHAT THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND IS DOING



OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE PRINCE'S FARM RESILIENCE PROGRAMME IS OFFERING **1,500 FARM BUSINESSES FREE WORKSHOPS** AND ONE-TO-ONE GUIDANCE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE IN THEIR BUSINESSES AND IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS AND **CHANGES NEEDED FOR THEIR FARMS.**



### WORLD WAR I

**1917** With millions of men fighting in World War I and Germany sinking one in four importing goods vessels, the **Women's Land Army** (WLA) is founded to provide farms with much-needed labourers. The uniform causes consternation, with many deeming trousers 'cross dressing'.



**1918** More than **223,000 women** now work the land, including 8,000 members of the WLA. Wheat production rises to 2.4 million tonnes – from 1.7 million before war broke out.

### AGE OF THE TRACTOR

**1919** During the war, half a million horses were sent to the front line. As a result, the **Government spends \$3.3 million on US-made tractors** – such as the famous Fordson – with more than 6,000 machines now operating on British farms.



**1927** John Deere puts its first tractor-pulled combine into production.

**Late 1920s** Intensive farming methods are adopted, with the first battery hens and pig-fattening houses introduced. Nitrogen fertiliser, first synthesised in the mid-19th century, is increasingly affordable and abundant.

\*Office of National Statistics for the year ending 5 April 2016

©Stock, Getty Images, Alamy

# HOW MUCH FOR A PINT OF MILK?

Falling prices are forcing many farmers to borrow more to stay afloat. Three-quarters of us say we'd be willing to pay extra for milk if farmers benefited directly, but when we're shopping, would we really be prepared to part with more of our hard-earned cash?

All UK farming sectors have been hit hard by low prices in recent years – none more so than the dairy industry. Although there has been a partial recovery in the past few months, according to the levy-funded AHDB Dairy (a division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board), during the two years from April 2014, the price farmers received for their milk fell by 34%.

Even in May this year, farmers received an average of just 28.13p per litre for their milk. For some, this hasn't been enough to cover their costs and many have already left the profession. Some 66% of UK dairy farms have closed since 1995. Of those that remain, many have been forced to rely on credit. A 2016 report carried out by consultant Andersons for The Prince's Countryside Fund shows that farm borrowing levels have almost doubled in the past decade, and that 17% of farms were unable to pay off their short-term debts.

But it seems we have sympathy with the difficulties dairy farmers face. Three out of four people in our survey said they would happily pay a bit more for their milk, provided the money went to the farmer. Indeed, one in four would be prepared to pay 50p or more extra for a four-pint carton of semi-skimmed. As 32% of us believe its price to be £1.20, as opposed to the £1 that's most commonly charged in supermarkets, perhaps there is room for manoeuvre.

Even so, it is one thing saying we'd willingly pay more and something else entirely actually doing so – not least as 42% of us view price as our main motivator when buying food. So it could be that stressing the quality of home-produced milk is the way forward, given that 33% of us cite quality as our main purchasing trigger.

Many farmers identify the need to foster trust with the public as a way of encouraging them to accept higher prices. "We produce dairy products to a really high quality in this nation," says Bryce Cunningham, a third-generation dairy farmer from Ayrshire. "But the public don't realise the work that goes into it." For Cunningham, farm assurance schemes such as Red Tractor "have a very important role to play", provided they are widely understood by the buying public (see box opposite).

Either way, with 56% of us believing globalisation and the availability of cheap imported food to be the biggest issue facing British family farms today, yet only 15% of us citing UK production as our main motivator when purchasing food, it seems there's an impasse to address.



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**FARM GATE  
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BETWEEN 2014 AND 2016

BUT  
**75%**  
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FOR MILK  
IF THE EXTRA  
COST DIRECTLY  
BENEFITED UK  
FARMERS

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"It's a high input business, the milk industry. In order to produce milk you need to put a lot of cost into it in terms of feed, fertiliser, equipment for silage making and all that sort of stuff. It's easy to lose money. That means that pressure is coming on a lot of those businesses"

STEPHEN JAMES, NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU) CYMRU PRESIDENT, JULY 2016

"While there will always be challenges in farming, as dairy farmers we remain incredibly fortunate to have the backing of the British public, who tell us how much they value British milk, butter, cheese, yogurt and cream. It is hugely important that we work hard to encourage the next generation of young and energetic farmers to take forward the dairy farming sector"

ABI READER, MEMBER OF NFU DAIRY BOARD



**ONE IN FOUR  
OF US WOULD  
BE PREPARED  
TO PAY 50P OR  
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FOR A 4-PINT  
CARTON OF  
SEMI-SKIMMED  
MILK**



# GOOD FARMING PRACTICE

Across all sectors, farm assurance schemes give shoppers a clear indication of high quality, standards of production and UK provenance. Farmers believe accreditation schemes play a considerable role in persuading the public to pay more for their produce, with 30% saying they are the single most influential factor

ACCREDITATION SCHEMES

RED TRACTOR



**What is it?** Britain's biggest farm and food standards scheme, covering animal welfare, food safety, traceability and environmental protection.

**What does it mean?** Rigorous production standards from farm to pack; full traceability of produce; high standards of animal welfare including limited use of animal medicines; reduced use of fertilisers and pesticides; fully British provenance.

**What do I look out for?** The Red Tractor's Union Jack logo on packs and the 'Made With' stamp on ready meals and pies.

BRITISH LION FOOD SAFETY SCHEME



**What is it?** Code of practice covering the entire production chain of eggs, guaranteeing food and safety controls in excess of those guaranteed by UK and EU law.

**What does it mean?** All hens and eggs are UK produced; hens are vaccinated against salmonella; its passport system ensures all birds are fully traceable; feed and hygiene are continually monitored.

**What do I look out for?** Lion logo printed on egg boxes and individual eggs.

QUALITY STANDARD MARK



**What is it?** Scheme governing beef and lamb production in the UK.

**What does it mean?** All beef and lamb under the scheme is fully traceable, subject to an independently inspected supply chain, has been selected for its eating quality (eg meat from older animals is excluded from the scheme) and has a British provenance.

**What do I look out for?** The Quality Standard Beef or Lamb logo on packs with either an English or British flag.

THE RECESSION

**1933-1939** To buffer the impact of worldwide recession, **import controls, price support and marketing boards are established.** Milk production rises 30% during this period.

**1939** Before **World War II**, Britain imports 55 million tonnes of food annually. The British Ministry of Agriculture



launches the **Dig for Victory** campaign in October. The public are encouraged to grow their own food and open spaces are turned into allotments. Four million acres of grassland are put into food production and, over time, we become 30% self-sufficient in crops.

**1940** Bacon, butter and sugar are first on the list when rationing is

officially introduced in January.

ORGANIC VS BIG BUSINESS

**1940** The **organic movement begins to gain momentum.** Botanist Sir Albert Howard - hailed as the father of organic farming - publishes *An Agricultural Testament* in praise of traditional methods.

**1942** Agronomist Norman Borlaug - awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his contribution to world food supply - begins the development of semi-dwarf, high-yield, disease-resistant wheat varieties.

**1943** Lady Eve Balfour publishes *The Living Soil*, an account of a non-intensive farming trial known as the Haughley



Experiment, which, she says, proves organic methods are better for man and the planet. It leads to the formation of advocacy group the Soil Association.

**1945** Hedgerows begin to be removed, to create bigger, more productive, fields. Between 1945 and 1990, in parts of the country almost 50% of hedgerows are pulled out.

SUBSIDIES & PROTECTIONS

**1947** The Agriculture Act 1947 is passed to shore up food security, providing price, market and tenure guarantees.

**1949** Agricultural output is up: between 1947 and 1952, it rises 20%.

**1951** *The Archers* - the radio soap centred on farming families - airs for the first time on Radio 4. It's now the longest-running soap in the world.

**1952** The first self-propelled combine harvester is launched in Europe by Claey's.

**1962** The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) assures good prices for farmers within what is now the EU.

IN COMES EEC

**1973** Britain enters the European Economic Community and small-scale production becomes increasingly uneconomic, leading to enlargement and specialisation. Farmers

are paid for whatever they produce, resulting in vast food 'mountains'.

**1980** Now a net exporter of grains, **Britain is 80% self-sufficient in crops.**



**1984** European milk quotas are introduced, to prevent overproduction, decimating many UK herds.

MOVE TO CONSERVATION

**Mid 1980s** *The Archers'* Pat and Tony decide to go organic on Bridge Farm, reflecting the rise of organic farming in the UK.

**1988** Set-aside payments are brought in, aiming to reduce crop surpluses and bring environmental benefits, from improving the soil quality to encouraging an increase in wildlife.

And *BBC Countryfile* is broadcast for the first time and attracts an average of 8.6 million viewers.

# WHERE ARE ALL THE YOUNG FARMERS?

With an average age of 59, British farmers are on the brink of retirement. While there are great opportunities in agriculture, attracting the next generation is a real challenge

When they were asked what they thought was the average age of farmers in the UK, our survey respondents dramatically underestimated the true picture. Out of those who felt confident enough to hazard a guess, 44% thought it was 49 or younger – and 14% thought the average age was 39 or less. The actual average is 59.

Like any profession, farming needs to welcome new blood if it is to thrive. However, the stark reality is that only 3% of UK farmers are under the age of 35. This was a source of concern among the farmers we surveyed, with 70% saying they believed not enough young people are coming into farming.

Even allowing for the challenges farmers face through mounting costs, low commodity prices and the uncertainty of a post-Brexit future, 15% named succession and inheritance as the largest issues threatening family-run farms today.

"Youngsters don't like hard work," was one farmer's view. "Children aren't interested as there's a lot more money elsewhere," said another. A third commented, "There's not enough income in farming and the cost of doing it is expensive. Young ones see things differently."

Perhaps they do, and maybe this is symptomatic of a wider loss of food knowledge in the younger generation. When our survey of the public asked about the seasons of British foods, the 18-24 age group fared noticeably worse than the 55+ band. Take seven common ingredients – apples, blackberries, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, carrots, lettuce and tomatoes. An average of 41% of the younger age band did not know when these are in season, compared to just 9% of the older group.

This is mirrored by a general lack of awareness about the countryside among younger people. Some 12% of 18- to 24-year-olds have never seen a cow, 16% have never visited a farm and 17% have not visited the countryside at all. This compares with 1%, 9% and 3% respectively of the over-55s. Not that the young are pretending they're experts: 42% of 18- to 24-year-olds described their knowledge of farming and the countryside as 'poor' or 'extremely poor', compared with 23% of the 55+ group.

"As long as you have young people coming in to farming, then family farms will be fine," said one surveyed farmer. We can but hope that the next generation – whether they grew up on a farm or not – continue to feel the allure of the rural life.

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

**"Young people are a vital part of those communities and farming needs them, too. Promoting the opportunities available in the industry is certainly part of the ethos of our 624 Young Farmers' Clubs across England and Wales, which are dedicated to developing young people who have a love of agriculture and rural life"**

CHARLOTTE SMITH, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

**"New entrants to farming have almost no possibility of buying a farm in England – the cost of land and rural housing is just too high. Yet these new entrants have the passion, vision and skills needed"**

ZOE WANGLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ECOLOGICAL LAND CO-OPERATIVE

**"Farming can provide a great career and there are a wide range of routes into the industry. I would encourage anyone thinking about it to make the most of opportunities to learn from each other. There are brilliant courses at colleges and plenty of ways to learn from other farmers in local discussion groups. While it can be incredibly hard work, and long hours, farming is also immensely rewarding"**

ADAM HENSON, FARMER, AUTHOR AND TELEVISION PRESENTER



# 70%

OF BRITISH FARMERS THINK THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH YOUNG PEOPLE COMING INTO THE PROFESSION

## THE AVERAGE AGE OF A UK FARMER IS 59

– 75% OF US BELIEVE THEY ARE YOUNGER OR DON'T KNOW WHAT THE AVERAGE AGE MIGHT BE



## 3%

OF UK FARMERS ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 35



## 41%

OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS DO NOT KNOW WHEN COMMON FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ARE IN SEASON, COMPARED WITH JUST 9% OF THE OVER-55s



## YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS

## 77%

SAY THEY'VE CLIMBED A TREE

## 55%

HAVE SWUM IN A RIVER AND

## 53%

HAVE GROWN THEIR OWN TOMATOES

BUT

## 12%

OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS HAVE NEVER SEEN A COW, 16% HAVE NEVER VISITED A FARM AND 17% HAVE NEVER VISITED THE COUNTRYSIDE AT ALL

## 89%

OF OVER-55s SAID SUMMER IS THE SEASON OF THE STRAWBERRY. ONLY 46% OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS GAVE THE SAME ANSWER

# Taking on the mantle

THE NEXT GENERATION

"I've never really wanted to do anything else," says Jack Hanson. "I started helping out when I was quite small. Feeding the lambs and calves, checking on the animals, that sort of thing. You gradually get drawn in. Once it's got into you, it's hard to get away."

Hanson, 25, took an agriculture degree to equip himself with the broad skills base needed for a career in farming – and benefited from The Prince's Countryside Fund in the form of a first-aid course organised through his local young farmers' club. He now works on his family farm in Herefordshire, where, alongside his father, he rears sheep and beef cattle, and grows apples. "I find it very rewarding. I get a good level of responsibility and a say in how the business is run."

His favourite part of the job is the connection he has with the livestock. "I really enjoy the calving," he says. "When you've been up all night with them, it's rewarding to then see the calves grow into healthy cows. I like apple harvesting, too. After you've spent winter pruning the trees in the wind and the rain, it's nice to sit on a tractor on a sunny autumn afternoon and pick up all the fruit."

Hanson believes he is fairly typical in his desire to take on the family farm. "There won't be many young people around here who aren't interested in continuing farming," he says. However, he does believe there is a lack of new blood coming into the profession and that this presents a real problem.

"I think farming is potentially being held back in this country by

a handful of older people, who could be said to be somewhat unproductive," he says. "If it weren't for subsidies, they'd probably have to retire, which would make room for younger farmers who might take risks and change things for the better."

Hanson anticipates stepping into his father's shoes when the time comes. Although he doesn't yet have children of his own, he hopes one day to pass the farm on to the next generation. "It would depend on what the children want to do," he says. "They might not be interested. But it's nice to have someone in your family want to take your work on. You've worked hard all your life. It's good to see someone want to continue that."

*"I find it very rewarding. I get a good level of responsibility and a say in how the business is run. I enjoy that"*



## WHAT THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND IS DOING



Through its grant giving programme, The Prince's Countryside Fund helps to support many young people during their vocational education, while its Land Rover Bursary allows five young people each year to develop their business or career with a year's lease of a vehicle.

Schemes such as its Yorkshire Moors Agricultural Apprenticeship Scheme equip the next generation of farmers with valuable professional skills.

The grant giving programme also supported the creation of the

Countryside Classroom, an online portal that shares resources for teachers to educate children about food, farming and the environment.

The Prince's Countryside Fund is committed to supporting rural communities. The Cornish village of Grampound was able to reopen its local store and coffee shop thanks to one of its grants. The shop is the heart of the community – it provides local jobs and volunteering opportunities, a place for residents to meet, and a valuable outlet for local food suppliers.



**Early 1990s** Automated milking machines – also known as **robotic milkers** – become commercially available.



## FARMING IN CRISIS

**1990** The spread of **BSE - Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy**, a fatal neurological disease commonly referred to as mad cow disease – reaches its peak, with 100,000 cases confirmed.

**1996** In the wake of humans contracting (new) variant **Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, vCJD**,

a condition akin to BSE, a global export ban lasts for 10 years.

**2001** The **foot-and-mouth outbreak** deals British farmers a huge blow with 6.5 million animals slaughtered and 3,200 farmers quitting the industry.

## DEREGULATION & INNOVATION

**2005** The **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** has a series of **reforms**, uncoupling subsidies from food production. Farmers' payments are now largely proportional to the land they own.

**2006** LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) launches **Open Farm Sunday**. This annual

event gives the public a chance to go behind farm gates. More than 1.8 million people have since visited.

**2008** The **set-aside system is abolished**. Environmentally friendly farming is instead supported by the development of more-flexible 'greening' rules.

**Late 2000s** **Precision farming techniques**, such as GPS-driven harvesting, are popularised.

**2010** EU regulations specify 5% of every farm should be set aside as an **Ecological Focus Area**. The acreage can be split across field buffers, fallow areas and cover crops.

**2013** The **Basic Payment Scheme** is introduced to replace Single Payments,

which were made largely per hectare. Farmers have to comply with environmental and animal welfare rules to qualify.

**2014** Touted as an end to back-breaking tasks, an increasing number of **Farmbots** – such as 'lettuce bots', which hoe weeds between crop lines, and 'wine bots', which prune vines – are being developed.

## NEW RECORDS

**2014** New Holland Agriculture in Wragby, Lincolnshire, sets a new world record in August for **most wheat harvested in eight hours** – almost 30,000 bushels, or 800 tonnes.

**Late 2014** The **average price of British farmland** reaches a record £8,000 per acre.

**2015** In February it is reported that Britain grows 60% of its own food. **Farming is worth £26 billion a year** to the economy.

Northumberland farmer Rod Smith achieves a **world record wheat yield** when he harvests 16.52 tonnes/hectare on his farm overlooking Holy Island in September. Victory is short-lived, however, as in April 2017,

his record is broken by a New Zealander.

## HARD TIMES

**2016** Records show **476,000 people work in farming** in 2016. That's 1.5% of the total workforce – down 32% on 1996 figures.

According to the NFU, **60% of farmers in Britain have had to diversify to stay afloat** – opening

everything from farm shops to unrelated businesses.

## PROMISING FUTURE?

**2016** In December, the world's first fully robotic farming experiment takes place at Harper Adams University in Shropshire.

**2017** In February, **global sales of UK food and**

**drink hit £20 billion** for the first time, with sales to the USA rising 12% and overall exports up almost 10% over 2016.

In June, a NFU survey shows **farmer confidence has taken a significant knock in the wake of the Brexit referendum** – with levels dropping 18 points in the past two years – despite farmers being in favour of leaving the EU at the time of the vote.

# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR COUNTRYSIDE?

Does the county you live in affect your awareness of the countryside and farming? We chart the similarities and differences between the regions...

### OUTDOOR LIVING

As many as 43% of Northern Irishers have played pooh sticks, while 52% have tried river swimming and just under half have fed baby lambs



### FRUIT LOVERS

In the North West, 70% of folk know that strawberries are in season in summer. However, just 30% realise courgettes are a summer veg



### COUNTRY LIFE

In the West Midlands, 42% have milked a cow and 9 in 10 have been to the countryside

### PRICE IS RIGHT

The most price-sensitive part of the UK is the East Midlands, with 51% citing cost as their main motivator when buying food



### FARMER'S LIFE

The lure of the agricultural life is strongest in Wales, where 32% of people said they'd give up their day job to work on a farm

### MORE FOR MILK

People from the South West are the most willing to pay more for their milk, with 80% saying they would be happy to fork out a bit extra if it benefited farmers directly



### NOT SO RURAL

Only 18% of people in the South East rate their knowledge of the countryside and farming as good or excellent. Of this figure, more than half have learnt from personal experience



### GREAT SCOTS

Aberdeen Angus is the most recognised UK breed of cattle, with 56% identifying it as indigenous to our island. This rises to 71% in its native Scotland

### THREE CHEERS

People in the North East mostly applaud farmers' abilities to properly manage the land, with 69% believing farmers do a good job

### LOVERS OF LOCAL

28% of people from Yorkshire and the Humber have never climbed a tree - but they do fly the flag for British producers, with 22% saying produce from the UK is the main factor when deciding what food to buy



### SPEAR ROOM

People in the east of England are the most knowledgeable about the UK asparagus season, with 40% placing it in spring and a further 30% opting for summer



### CITY EXODUS

Almost half of Londoners like to get away from the big smoke regularly - 49% have visited the countryside in the past month



# CARING FOR THE LAND

Farmers do so much more than farm. They also play a key role in managing our countryside - an important job that ensures our wildlife, pathways, rivers and forests are maintained for all to enjoy

**We all know what farmers do, right?** They grow crops, milk cows, rear animals... whatever it takes to put food in our shops. But what else do they do? When it comes to their role as custodians of the land, it appears we're in the dark. Only one in five of us (21%) thinks farmers play the lead role in managing our countryside for everyone's benefit. More of us (23%) believe this stewardship role is undertaken by central government, local councils or the National Trust, with 42% assuming a combination of these four groups is responsible.

Perhaps this impression is founded in our misconception about how much land in the UK is set aside for farming. Almost half of us (47.5%) think less than 50% of UK land is farmed, while a further 32% didn't feel confident enough to guess. The true figure is 71.2%. Only 5% placed the figure at 70% or higher.

To be fair, many of us aren't claiming we're experts. When asked how they would rate their knowledge of the countryside and farming, 32% chose 'poor' or 'extremely poor'. Even among those who professed good or excellent knowledge, much of this was gleaned from TV or radio, with programmes such as *Countryfile* and *The Archers* the top source of information for 18- to 24-year-olds and 25- to 34-year-olds (see right).

Often, it's these non-core stewardship activities that give farmers most satisfaction. When our farmers' poll asked the question, 'What do you enjoy most about being a farmer?', the top answer was 'Being my own boss' (18%). However, if you combine similar answers 'I like spending time out in nature' (14%) 'The fresh air' and 'Being in the countryside', the figure comes out at 34%.

"The vast majority of farmers appreciate the need for sustainable agriculture and environmentally mindful farming practices," says Ed Barker, farm manager and stewardship expert with land agents Cheffins. "While running an economically viable business, they also like to know they're improving wildlife, whether that's encouraging barn owl habitats, putting down wildlife corridors or leaving wildflower margins at the edge of fields."

Some 73% of us think farmers properly manage the land they look after, including the environment and the wildlife. This figure rises to 89% when you take out the 'don't knows'. So, we might underestimate the role farmers play as stewards of the land but, when push comes to shove, we trust them to do a good job of it.

### WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

**"Farmers are the custodians of our countryside... Areas of wildflowers, hedges and nest boxes make a big difference to pollinating insects, wild birds and small mammals as they navigate their way through our landscape"**

STEPHANIE HILBORNE OBE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS, JUNE 2016

**"The Countryside Stewardship scheme plays a crucial role in enhancing our environment - conserving and restoring habitats to help wildlife recover, creating woodlands to improve air quality and reduce flood risk, and improving our landscapes to increase productivity and resilience"**

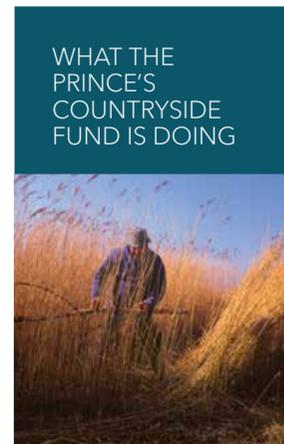
GEORGE EUSTICE, MINISTER OF STATE (DEFRA), DECEMBER 2016

# 71.2%

OF UK LAND IS USED FOR FARMING

ALMOST A THIRD OF BRITONS SURVEYED (32%) BELIEVE THE FIGURE IS 30% OR LESS

ALMOST THREE-QUARTERS OF BRITS WE ASKED (73%) BELIEVE THAT FARMERS PROPERLY MANAGE THE LAND THEY LOOK AFTER, INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE



WHAT THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND IS DOING

THROUGH ITS GRANT GIVING PROGRAMME, THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND SUPPORTS A WIDE VARIETY OF STEWARDSHIP LEARNING. RECENT BENEFICIARIES HAVE LEARNED ABOUT REED AND SEDGE CUTTING, AND FORESTRY, WHILE THE FUND'S REST ASSURED PROJECT CARRIES OUT HERITAGE REPORTS TO GLEAN AND PASS ON THE STEWARDSHIP KNOWLEDGE OF OLDER RETIRED FARMERS.



## Countryfile vs The Archers

According to our survey, BBC One's *Countryfile* and Radio 4's *The Archers* are great sources of information among 18- to 34-year-olds who feel relatively knowledgeable about farming and the countryside. While 27% learn about rural matters from personal experience, 34% rely heavily on the BBC. So, exactly what are they discovering?

### WHAT ARE THEY?

**COUNTRYFILE** V **THE ARCHERS**  
 BBC One news programme launched in 1988. Each week, 60-minute episodes feature reports on rural and environmental issues. The presenters typically visit a region and uncover the stories, characters and traditions which make the area distinctive.  
 BBC Radio 4's flagship drama is the world's longest-running soap opera. Launched in 1951 as 'an everyday story of country folk', its six weekly episodes (and Sunday omnibus) set in the fictional village of Ambridge draw more than 5 million listeners.

### CREDENTIALS

**COUNTRYFILE** V **THE ARCHERS**  
 Presenter John Craven is a distinguished TV journalist with over 40 years' experience. Co-presenters include Adam Henson, who runs a mixed farm in the Cotswolds, and Tom Heap, who presents a weekly investigation into issues affecting the countryside - recent examples include fly-tipping, MRSA in pigs and the replacement for the Common Agricultural Policy.  
 The show tackles serious rural issues, such as drug addiction, family breakdown and financial hardship. It's an early-adopter of farming trends - Bridge Farm's conversion to organic status, in 1984, was long before the term became commonplace. These days, rural rigour is maintained by agricultural advisor Graham Harvey, a farming journalist for more than 40 years.

### TAKE ONE SUNDAY: WHAT THEY FEATURED...

**COUNTRYFILE** V **THE ARCHERS**  
 Craven and co were in Suffolk to report on the creation of a nature reserve, a community farming project, protecting cows from dog attacks and birds' egg thefts.  
 Hot topics in Ambridge included family discussions on the succession of Home Farm, a birdwatching trip, massive debt at Brookfield Farm and the village's cricket loss to Edgeley.

### TAKE ONE SUNDAY: WHAT THEY SAID...

**COUNTRYFILE** V **THE ARCHERS**  
 "If you hoe a row of beans alongside somebody, you can really get to know them."  
 "I can't wait to hear the full panoply of early-morning birdsong. Listen to that, Kirsty. Is it a blackcap?"

# KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

When Colin Hinchliffe returned to work on his family farm after a career in engineering and sales, he brought a wealth of ideas and experience that has helped the farm adapt for the future

**ROGER HINCHLIFFE, 66,** and his wife **HELEN, 55,** run a small family farm in the Peak District. Three years ago, their son **COLIN, 32,** returned to work with them on the farm with his wife **KATIE, 33,** and their almost two-year-old son **WILLIAM.**

**ROGER:** It was 1983 when we bought this farm. We were dairy farmers. My dad was a dairy farmer and his father had been a dairy farmer. But there was a lot of uncertainty in dairy back then, so we sold the milk cows in 1996. It was an emotional time. I'd milked all my life. It was all I knew. In hindsight, it was a good decision.

**HELEN:** We converted the milking parlour into a livery yard. We look after horses for other people.

**COLIN:** You look at the fields where the horses are kept – they're scrubby and untended, but those four fields are the most profitable ones on the farm. **HELEN:** Then we built two holiday cottages, which we opened in 2000. This is in addition to our sheep and the beef cattle.

**ROGER:** We wouldn't survive without the livery yard or the cottages. If you go back to when my dad started, in 1953, he milked eight cows. He had about 20 sheep and a couple of pigs. And he made a living out of that. He worked on the family farm. That's all.

**COLIN:** Though it's a family business, Mum and Dad never pressured me – or my brother or sister – to keep the farm going. It was more like, 'Go experience other things, other ways of doing things, you can always come back'.

So I got a degree, then worked in engineering and sales. I think if I hadn't gained that experience, if I had just carried on at the farm, it would have stifled things. We would have been very inward-looking; we wouldn't be flexible to change.

**HELEN:** You have to evolve, don't you? What was good yesterday isn't necessarily good today. Farming is more educated now. You can't wing it any more. In the old days, if a cow was sick, you'd give it a one-size-fits-all drug. Whereas now, Colin will assess the situation and know what to do. There's a greater arsenal of knowledge at his disposal.

**ROGER:** A good example is our sheep – these days we buy rams purely based on their gene pool.

**COLIN:** We buy off a spreadsheet. We look at how they rank on certain things – like whether they gain weight quickly or if they are more likely to breed more than one lamb. It's data-driven. Each sheep has to have an electronic tag so it can be identified. We use that to record data on how much it weighs, how much its lambs weigh, how much it has grown and so on. This allows us to view everything more efficiently.

**HELEN:** The family dynamic in farming has changed. Where a farmer would once pass his knowledge on to the son, now farmers' sons have their own education. It's not just knowledge filtering down the generations, it's knowledge pushing up the generations.

**COLIN:** It's healthy for me that I feel I can speak up to the generation above. Mum and Dad are good at listening to



*“Where a farmer would once pass his knowledge on to the son, now farmers' sons have their own education. It's not just knowledge filtering down the generations, it's knowledge pushing up the generations”*

new ideas. That's one thing we like about The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme. We've been to two workshops so far and we get little nuggets of information from each one.

**ROGER:** You always pick something up. **COLIN:** The information usually isn't game-changing, but there might be a good idea to make things more efficient. That's what I love most about my job. I've worked in business and in industry, which is so bureaucratic and where anything you want to do needs approval. Now I enjoy that the decisions I make are acted on almost instantly.

**ROGER:** For me, living in a place like this is the rewarding thing. I love the connection with the countryside. **HELEN:** We had a caravan for years, but we never used it. Why go sit in the middle of a field with a load of other people when we've got our own beautiful fields here.

**ROGER:** It is beautiful, but it is farming

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

**“Surviving in the short term can be tough enough but the longer-term survival of small family farms can be jeopardised by a lack of succession planning and provision for retirement. It is vitally important to ensure a dignified retirement for elderly farmers alongside active planning for succession”**

**PROFESSOR MATT LOBLEY, UNIVERSITY OF EXETER (CO-AUTHOR OF THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND RESEARCH PROJECT)**

**“Family-run farms have a connection to the land that will allow us to get through financial difficulties. We have always been connected to the land. It has been passed down from our fathers and grandfathers”**

**ANONYMOUS RESPONDENT TO FARMERS' SURVEY**

**“It has been heartening to learn how innovative many small farms are, and the positive contribution they continue to make to the rural landscape with strong social, community and economic benefits. Support is needed now to retain viable enterprises and to encourage the next generation into farming”**

**CLAIRE SAUNDERS, DIRECTOR, THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND, JULY 2016**

**15%**

OF BRITISH FARMERS NAMED SUCCESSION OR INHERITANCE BY THE NEXT GENERATION AS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING FAMILY-RUN FARMS TODAY



**BUT LESS THAN 40%** OF FARMERS HAVE PUT EFFECTIVE SUCCESSION PLANS IN PLACE

**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10 (WITH 10 BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT), FARMERS RATED THE IMPORTANCE OF FARMS BEING FAMILY RUN AS**

**‘5.7’**



**“My Countryside Fund is a response to the threats facing our countryside as we know and love it. Farming and rural communities are under immense pressure to an extent perhaps unprecedented in my lifetime. So many of us enjoy walking and visiting the moors, fells and dales of our country. We love them for their breathtaking**

**beauty and for the very special communities that make up the unique rural tapestry. But both are entirely dependent on agriculture and on the farmers who, for generations, have cared for the land. They are also dependent on their families who are so often the backbone of the villages and market towns, whether as school governors, church wardens or members of the W.I. and Rotary.”**

**HRH The Prince of Wales, Founder of The Prince's Countryside Fund**



**2010**

HRH The Prince of Wales launches The Prince's Countryside Fund with the backing of major UK brands and retailers.

**2012**

BBC *Countryfile* features HRH The Prince of Wales's visit to the Durham Dales to see how the Fund has supported the work of UTASS (Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services).

**2014**

Extreme flooding affects the Somerset Levels, displacing animals and families. A Fund appeal raises £300,000 to help the affected farm communities.

**2016**

The Prince's Countryside Fund report 'Is there a future for the small family farm in the UK?' is published. HRH The Prince of Wales launches The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme. The second national Forum is held in London.

**2011**

More than £1.2 million is distributed in the first 18 months of operation. The Prince's Dairy Initiative is launched to support small dairy farms.

**2013**

A fundraising appeal raises £624,000 to help the farming community after more than 150,000 animals were lost in severe winter weather. The Land Rover Bursary is launched, which has since benefited 20 businesses.

**2015**

The first national Forum is held, bringing together organisations from around the country. Emergency funds are released after Storm Desmond devastates the North, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A summit at Chatsworth House in October discusses growing concerns about agricultural cashflows and the future of the family farm.

**2017**

The grant programme reaches a new milestone with 220 projects supported and £8.5 million distributed. Over 200 farms take part in The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme workshops.

## THE FUTURE OF FARMING

The willingness of farmers to future-proof their farms by embracing change and modernisation could determine whether family farms will survive for generations to come

**Family farming** stands at a crossroads. Farm-gate prices in many sectors over the past few years have been at a historic low. One in five farms generates a loss – and that's even before they start accounting for family labour. Levels of farm borrowing have almost doubled in the past decade. This bleak picture is dissuading many of the younger generation from entering the profession.

Farming is hard work, we all know that, but without fair reward for their endeavours, who could blame farmers for feeling downbeat about their future?

When we asked our farmers how confident they were that family farms can be viable in the future, their comments highlighted the real concerns they feel. "Family farms are facing tough challenges," said one farmer.

"We have to put in a lot of hours. The younger generation who come from a family farm realise this and are looking for different jobs with better money," added another.

"Things are changing and there is so much uncertainty for the future," commented a third.

But in the main our farmers are mostly bullish, refusing to buckle under the weight of the challenges they face – as their confidence score of 5.7 out of 10 in response to our survey question on the viability of family farms demonstrates.

When they were asked to justify their confidence rating, our farmers' comments display a realisation that they can't sit back and be a passive partner to change: "By diversifying and adding value it will allow smaller family farms to be viable in the future," said one.

Their comments further show a proud recognition of the unique service they provide: "There will always be a place for the smaller farms," said another. "The personal touches are what makes us different."

There's a sense of duty behind their determination to succeed: "We put in hard work because the country needs us. The population is growing so we need to make it work."

And when all else fails, there's a quiet determination and a strong sense of vocation to guide the way: "We've had ups and downs before, it's not all about the money for us. It's a lifestyle and a tradition."

Family farms are the beating, living heart of the British countryside. Their industry brings in vital economic benefits to rural regions and their diversity adds variety and interest to the landscape. Their efforts nourish our growing population and maintain our green and pleasant countryside. Without them, our land would be a poorer place.



**BRITISH FOOD PRODUCERS SUPPLIED 52% OF FOOD CONSUMED IN THE UK IN 2016**

**AND THE EU COUNTRIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR A FURTHER 29%**

**THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR CONTRIBUTED £108 BILLION TO THE UK ECONOMY LAST YEAR AND EMPLOYED 3.9 MILLION PEOPLE**

### WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

**"There is a limit to which small farms can resist the constant pressures being put on them – their resolve is being continually tested"**

LORD CURRY, CHAIRMAN, THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND, JULY 2016

**"The family farm is alive and well in all its forms. Family farmers are innovative and have embraced new technologies. We've moved with the times"**

ROSIE DUNN, YORKSHIRE BEEF, SHEEP AND ARABLE FARMER, JANUARY 2017

**"There will always be family-run farms as we are prepared to work hard, even though we receive less and less money for our efforts, just to be able to stay where we are"**

ANONYMOUS RESPONDENT TO FARMERS' SURVEY

**"Small-scale farms are diversified, regionalised and ecologically based. Forward thinking, stewardship-minded and creative beginner farmers are full of enthusiasm and fresh ideas"**

PHIL MOORE, WRITING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

## How the Scotch egg saved the farm

### FARM DIVERSIFICATION



"It all started when my wife, Deb, found a discarded Scotch egg wrapper in my car," recalls Colin Hodgkinson. "She said, 'Why buy those when I can make them for you?' So, she made a few and I had them for lunch."

Eight years on, Staffordshire Savoury Eggs supplies farmers' markets and delis in the Midlands and beyond. But success didn't come easy. Sales rep Colin and teacher Deb (pictured above) had bought a 25-acre smallholding. They installed sheep and pigs on the land but were struggling to make ends meet until Deb attended a course on farm diversification at a local college.

In class, Deb recalled her Scotch eggs. Impressed, the tutor suggested she make a batch for the college fête. "Blow me, if we weren't sold out within an hour and a half," says Colin. "I realised, we've got a market here."

The pair now produce a range of eggs – including a caramelised onion version, a black pudding

egg, and one flavoured with Gujarati spices. "You've got to be savvy about what people are looking for," says Colin. "It has to be a good product, but also something you can't get anywhere else."

Among the most rewarding aspects of the job is the warm feedback they receive from regular customers at farmers' markets. "When you've had to get up at 4am, load the van, travel an hour and you don't get home till 6pm, it's nice when customers are kind."

*Colin is optimistic the creative vigour he sees within the farming community will allow family farms to remain viable in the future*

Another satisfying aspect is that the business has been able to employ three local people. "After Deb gave up teaching, we were on just one wage. Now there are five people employed in the business."

Colin feels optimistic that the creative vigour within the farming community will allow family farms to remain viable in the future. "Our 14-year-old son wants to come into the business. He's digitally savvy and I can see he'll have a different spin on it. If he does it right, he'll make the business bigger and employ even more people."

### WAYS TO SUPPORT US

Your donations help the people who live and work in the countryside. Our grant programme helps vulnerable farm businesses, inspires young people to consider rural careers, and keeps our rural communities thriving places to live and work. Since 2010 we have awarded over £8.5 million.



**DONATE**  
Text PCF to 70300 to donate £3 or donate at a post office.

**BECOME A DONOR**  
Visit our website: [princescountrysidefund.org.uk/donate](http://princescountrysidefund.org.uk/donate) to make a single or regular donation.

**FUNDRAISE FOR US**  
Whether you're planning a summer fête or running a marathon, we would love to hear your ideas and help you make the most of your fundraising. Visit [princescountrysidefund.org.uk](http://princescountrysidefund.org.uk) to find out more and download a fundraising pack.

**JOIN IN EVENTS**  
Why not join us at Countryfile Live 2017 at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, (3-6 August) and walk a Country Mile in support of the countryside. To buy your tickets, visit [countryfilelive.com](http://countryfilelive.com).

On 24-25 November, The Prince's Countryside Fund Racing Weekend is taking place at Ascot Racecourse. It's a great day out. To find out more, visit [princescountrysidefund.org.uk](http://princescountrysidefund.org.uk)