

The National Trust announces MyFarm experiment

Submitted by: pr-sending-enterprises

Wednesday, 4 May 2011

The National Trust is looking for up to 10,000 people to take part in a mass on-line public farming experiment where they will make key decisions at one of the Trust's working farms at Wimpole in Cambridgeshire.

The MyFarm (<http://www.my-farm.org.uk>) experiment aims to connect thousands of people with how food is produced by giving them a greater say in how a real working farm is run.

The Wimpole Farm Manager, Richard Morris, will set monthly options for the 10,000 Farmers, who will debate and vote (<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/news-and-blog/the-first-vote-%E2%80%93-what-should-we-grow>) on issues including whether to grow wheat, barley or oats as part of the autumn sowing, through to which animals to buy and rear.

For a small subscription fee, farmers will get a daily behind-the-scenes insight into how the 1,200 acre organic farm operates, the right to make decisions on the farm by voting regularly and a family ticket to visit the farm for a day.

The MyFarm website will include video updates (<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/news-and-blog/check-out-our-launch-film>), webcams, live webchats, debates and comment and opinion from both well-known farming experts and National Trust tenant farmers.

Results from a new survey published to mark the MyFarm launch reveal that people in Great Britain rate their knowledge of food and farming at an average of only 4.5 out of 10, with 75 per cent of respondents hungry to know more about how food is produced.

Mothers, in particular, show there is a need for a new way of learning - rating the importance of their children understanding where their food comes from at 7.5 out of 10, yet only 8 per cent felt confident that they knew enough to teach their children all about it.

Fiona Reynolds, Director-General of the National Trust said: "MyFarm is an exciting new project that will give thousands of families and classrooms across the country the opportunity to experience the highs and lows and often complex decisions that farmers face on a daily basis.

"As the country's biggest farmer - more than 80 per cent of the 250,000 hectares of land under our care is farmed in some way - it's our role to re-connect people with farming (<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/on-the-farm>) to promote better understanding and greater protection for the land on which we all depend."

Richard Morris, the National Trust's Farm Manager at Wimpole said: "MyFarm is Farmville for real - real farming decisions with real farming consequences. By influencing the work at Wimpole our Farmers will start to understand the effects and implications of their own decisions. They will also witness first hand how unplanned events can turn a profitable year on its head.

"This winter hundreds of sugar beet growers have had to plough in their crops because of intense frost damage, resulting in a whole year of costs with no return. What surprises the weather holds for Wimpole this year only time will tell; but it will affect the farm's success and the choices the Farmers can make."

With only 10,000 Farmer places available, interested parties should sign up (<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/user/register>) now. More information can be found at www.my-farm.org.uk.

- ends -

About The National Trust:

The National Trust is one of the most important nature conservation charities in Europe. The Trust is involved in the whole food chain, with 200,000 hectares of food producing land, over 150 restaurants and tearooms, and historic kitchen gardens, orchards and mills. The charity has community growing spaces - from allotments to kitchen gardens - at over 50 locations around the country and is increasing these annually. These spaces inspire the Trust's 3.8 million members, 60,000 volunteers and visitors to think and learn about food. The National Trust is creating 1,000 new allotment plots on its land in the next three years to give local communities the space to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

PR Contact:

Steve Field
Assistant Press Officer
The National Trust
Heelis
Kemble Drive
Swindon
Wilts
SN2 2NA
01793 817740
www.nationaltrust.org.uk