

Let nature feed your senses

Encouraging a lifelong love of nature through farming and food



LET nature feed your senses is a joint project between LEAF and Sensory Trust funded by The Big Lottery through Access to Nature, a grant programme run by Natural England

When LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) approached Sensory Trust to partner on Let nature feed your senses we all thought, "Farms! Brilliant! Food! Cows! Tractors!" The opportunity to connect people to nature through food and farming seemed both an obvious and exciting possibility. After many years working with parks and gardens and historic landscapes, farms are relatively unexplored by the Trust. While farm visits are regular school outings, the opportunities for the wider public are less evident. And the sensory experiences, sights, sounds, and of course smells on a farm must surely be second to none.

Initial excitement led to anticipation as applications were submitted and the decision was in the lap of the grants panel at Access to Nature, a £25 million Lottery-funded grants programme run by Natural England. Well, the panel said, "Yes!" and now we are thinking, "Farms! Blimey! Stiles! Ruts! Gates! Mud! Other stenchy, squelchy stuff!"

The project will establish regional networks of farms, nature reserves and other natural spaces to explore sensory rich ways in which we can make the countryside more accessible, both physically and intellectually to as many people as possible.

Farming shapes the English countryside and plays a major part in the survival of the environment that everyone can enjoy. In fact most of our landscape is looked after by farmers (about 72% if you like numbers). When we are looking at a countryside landscape we are looking at a landscape where agriculture and nature are entwined. The project is focused on making lasting connections between food, farming and our everyday lives, working with people that normally don't or can't get out and about. In funding language that's older people, young people and people with disabilities, in particular those living in the 10% most deprived areas of England.

We are looking for people to be involved in the project in any way that they can. At the most basic level we will be organising visits to farms and farming environments. Beyond that we need people with direct experience to offer advice and guidance on how to best achieve our aims of accessible, enjoyable and engaging visits, by talking to farmers and other land managers about the things to consider when hosting events.

If you would like to be involved directly or know of a group that would benefit from being involved please contact Stuart Spurring at the Sensory Trust, stuartspurring@sensorytrust.org.uk or 01726 222900. <http://www.letnaturefeedyoursenses.org>