The Future of UK Farming

Fir Farm, Lower Swell
27th - 28th April 2018
With thanks to media partners

AGRICOLOGY

Cover photo by Christine Page, Smiling Tree Farm
Dear Participant,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the second Fir Farm conference, this time on the theme of the Future of UK Food in a post-Brexit context.

This event is taking place at a significant moment in time, not least because we are about to reach the end of the consultation period for the recently released DEFRA ‘Health and Harmony’ consultation paper.

In view of this, we are particularly delighted that our Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Gove and the newly elected President of the National Farmers Union, Minette Batters, will be our keynote speakers on the 27th of April, and that in addition to the wonderful line up of leading UK based speakers, we will also be hearing from Joel Salatin and Joel Williams, two of North America’s leading champions and advocates of sustainable agriculture.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sir Alan, Lady Parker and Paddy Hoare for hosting this event. Fir Farm, I’m sure you will agree, is a beautiful setting to stage these conversations.

I do hope you enjoy the next two days and I look forward to meeting you all.

Best wishes,

Patrick
Session themes

This conference will set out and debate the opportunities and consequences for farmers in a post-Brexit environment.

Throughout the programme, we will explore how we can design food systems which are profitable for farmers, whilst at the same time enhancing the environment and public health. We will also discuss growing consumer demand for local, traceable food and how all farmers can adapt to keep up with this market.

Over the course of two days, we will be exploring the following themes:

**Public Money for Public Goods**

How will the Government create ‘carrot and stick’ polices to reward farmers for doing the right thing? How will this accelerate the changes that are needed to create more sustainable farming systems with better environmental and health outcomes?

**Measuring Public Goods**

Are there clearer, simpler and more powerful metrics which could replace the current subsidy system and help determine eligibility for public purse support? The current process of field to fork involves multiple farm audits, overlapping certification schemes and a resulting mass consumer confusion about the best food to eat. How can we simplify the system, providing regulators with the information they need, encouraging continuous improvement and providing greater transparency in the market place?

**Building Better Soil Through Farming Practice**

Which methods of production have the potential to rebuild lost soil fertility, promote integrated nature conservation and create viable and profitable business models for producers? How could government measure such improvements and design incentives to help accelerate this change?
Delivering High Animal Welfare and Local Meat Through Small Abattoirs

How can we reverse the commoditisation and industrialisation of meat markets? Could more local slaughter facilities enable better marketing and shorter supply chains? Our speakers will explore these complex issues and assess the most recent research on whether on-farm slaughter is a viable option.

New Models for Local Food Systems

How can we design successful and profitable alternative retail systems which support the type of food and farming outlined in the government’s ‘Health and Harmony’ command paper? Exploring innovative models for reaching consumers which offer farmers greater opportunity and customers better quality and more local food.
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 - 13:30</td>
<td>Farm walk from the source of the River Dickler to Hill Barn (optional)</td>
<td>Guy Hayward and Will Parsons, British Pilgrimage Trust</td>
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<td>13:30</td>
<td>Arrive, tea and coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00 - 15:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 1 – The Future of UK Farming</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome:</strong> Patrick Holden, Sustainable Food Trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How will the Government act to create carrot and stick polices to reward farmers for doing the right thing and help accelerate the changes that are needed to create more sustainable farming systems with better environmental and health outcomes?</td>
<td><strong>Keynote address:</strong> The Rt Honorable Michael Gove MP Minette Batters, NFU</td>
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<td>15:30 - 16:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>16:00 - 17:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 2 – Measuring and Valuing Sustainability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Patrick Holden, Sustainable Food Trust</td>
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<td>The current process of field to fork involves multiple farm audits, overlapping certification schemes and a resulting mass consumer confusion about the best food to eat. How can we simplify the system, reducing the burden on producers, providing a tool for government to help determine eligibility for public money, whilst at the same time informing consumers about the true sustainability of products in the market place?</td>
<td><strong>Panel discussion:</strong> Andrew Sells, Natural England Edward Parsons, Waddesdon Estate</td>
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<td>18:30 onwards</td>
<td>Reception and dinner at Hill Barn</td>
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### Saturday 28th April

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>08:30 - 09:00</td>
<td>Arrive, bacon butties and tea and coffee</td>
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<td>09:00 - 10:30</td>
<td><strong>Session 3 - Polyface Farm</strong> - A story of soil, grass and animals</td>
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<td><strong>Keynote:</strong> Joel Salatin, Polyface Farm</td>
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<td>An introduction to Polyface Farm: describing the approach Joel Salatin has developed for more than 30 years in the management of a beef herd, pastured poultry and pigs.</td>
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<td>10:30 - 11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:30 - 13:00</td>
<td><strong>Session 4 – Linking Soil, Plant and Animal health</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Kim Wilkie</td>
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<td><strong>Panel discussion:</strong></td>
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<td>Joel Williams, Integrated Soils</td>
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<td>Adrian Dolby, Buccleuch Estate</td>
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<td>Hylton Murray Phillipson, Blaston Estate</td>
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<td>Rob Havard, Havard &amp; Co Organic Farms</td>
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<td>Science is emerging which provides evidence on the impact of current farming systems, but what does this mean for farmers? Which methods of production have the potential to rebuild lost soil fertility, promote integrated nature conservation and create viable and profitable business models for producers in future? How could government incentives help accelerate this change?</td>
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<td>13:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>Lunch and <em>In Our Hands</em> film screening</td>
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Saturday 28th April

14:00 – 15:30 Session 5 – Small Abattoirs and On-Farm Slaughter: The Future of Local Meat

Are there better ways to serve farmers and the food industry with local solutions? What are the current challenges facing small abattoirs in the UK? How can we address the need for more local slaughter facilities to enable more successful marketing and shorter supply chains for organic, grass-fed, heritage breeds? Our speakers will explore these complex issues and assess the most recent research on whether on-farm slaughter is a viable option.

Chair:
Tim Morris, Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Panel discussion:
Bob Kennard, Sustainable Food Trust
Joel Salatin, Polyface Farm
Paddy Hoare, Perdix Partnership
Natasha Jenkins, Local Authority Environment Health Officer
Robin Tuke, Hardiesmill

15:30 - 16:00 Break

16:00 - 17:30 Session 6 – New Models for Local Food Systems

Are there new, emergent, relocalised models that can challenge the current orthodoxy and revitalise local markets? Our speakers will discuss a range of new and exciting models for reaching customers which offer farmers new opportunities and customers better quality and service.

Chair:
Patrick Holden, Sustainable Food Trust

Panel discussion:
Darina Allen, Ballymaloe Cookery School
Adrian Dolby, Buccleuch
Ben Pugh, Farmdrop

Closing remarks:
Patrick Holden, Sustainable Food Trust

17:30 Programme ends with drinks at Hill Barn
**Darina Allen**

**Founder of Ballymaloe Cookery School**

Darina Allen owns and runs the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Shanagarry, Co Cork. She is a well-known cookbook author and television presenter, and writes weekly for the Irish Examiner and is President of the East Cork Slow Food Convivium. Darina set up the first Farmers Market in Ireland on the Coal Quay in Cork in 1996, and has been instrumental in setting up several more including the very successful Midleton Farmers Market. Darina is President of the East Cork Slow Food Convivium, trustee of the Irish Organic Centre, a patron of GIY Ireland, Member of Eurotoques (European Association of Chefs), Member of The Guild of Food Writers in Ireland and UK, Chair of the Food Safety Authority’s Artisan Food Forum and a member of the Taste Council of An Bord Bia.

**Minette Batters**

**President of the National Farmers Union**

Minette runs a tenanted family farm in Wiltshire. The mixed farming business includes a 100 cow continental cross suckler herd, and a small herd of pedigree Herefords as well as sheep and arable. Minette co-founded the campaigning initiatives ‘Ladies in Beef’ and the ‘Great British Beef Week’. She has been an NFU member from grassroots through to County Chairman; she served as Wiltshire’s Council delegate and also as Regional Board Chairman for the South West. Minette has also been a member of NFU Governance Board and served as NFU deputy president for four years from 2014 to 2018. Minette is also a Trustee of Farm Africa.

**Helen Browning**

**Chief Executive of the Soil Association**

Helen Browning farms organically in Wiltshire. Helen is Chief Executive of the Soil Association and prior to that was Director of External Affairs at the National Trust. Helen is past Chair and still a member of the Food Ethics Council. She was awarded an OBE in 1998 for services to organic farming.
Adrian Dolby
Head of Agriculture at Buccleuch

Adrian is Head of Agriculture at Buccleuch with responsibility for operations and strategy of the 22,000 ha in-hand farms and supporting the estate’s tenanted holdings. Buccleuch operate in Southern Scotland and Northamptonshire, extending to 82,000 ha and represent one of the largest privately owned land holdings in the UK. His career began with Velcourt and following a MSc at the Royal Agricultural College he joined Andersons in farm business consultancy, later moving to the Barrington Park Estate in the Cotswolds. Adrian completed the Institute of Agricultural Management leadership course in 2014 and previously sat on the Duchy Originals Future Farming Programme, 2012-2015. He is a former speaker at TED Global.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP was appointed Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 11 June 2017. He was elected Conservative MP for Surrey Heath in 2005.

Caroline Grindrod
Co-founder of Primal Meats

Caroline is a holistic management consultant who combines her skills in regenerative agriculture and environmental conservation with a cocktail of experience in running diversified businesses while maintaining a balanced life. Through the ‘Wildervore Approach’, she hopes to influence better farming and ecological restoration as well as build a movement of people seeking food grown from healthy ecosystems and a lifestyle that values healthy landscapes. Through her on-line meat business ‘Primal Meats’, she has developed a market for organic 100% grass fed meat as a nutritional aid for healing human health that by default improves the lives of farm animals and helps regenerate land.
Rob Havard
Organic farmer and ecologist

Rob Havard is a sixth generation farmer and professional ecologist working for Natural England as a Lead adviser for conservation grazing. Rob uses Holistic planned grazing to manage his pedigree Angus suckler herd in the Worcestershire Countryside. Rob’s focus is on the marriage of productivity and ecological gain. In particular Rob has been working with farmers in his area to restore the native wildflower meadows and just as importantly to show how they can be more profitable than conventional intensive grassland. “I think there is a place for a wildflower meadow on every farm and I hope that one day we will see these diverse pastures at the heart of every family farming operation”.

Guy Hayward
Co-founder of the British Pilgrimage Trust

Guy started off as a chorister at Cambridge University where he did a PhD in music, but decided not to become a traditional academic, and instead has carved out a role for himself, as an explorer of the intersection between spirituality, psychology, the arts, nature and religion. Guy co-founded the British Pilgrimage Trust, after writing a PhD on how singing forms community.

Dieter Helm
University of Oxford

Dieter Helm is Professor of Energy Policy at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of New College, Oxford. He is an economist specialising in utilities, infrastructure, regulation and the environment, and concentrates on the energy, water and transport sectors in Britain and Europe. He holds a number of advisory board appointments, including Chairman of the Academic Panel, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and member of the Advisory Panel on Energy and Climate Security, Department for Energy and Climate Change. He is a member of the expert panel for the Department of Transport’s Review of the Regulation of Airports. He was a member of the DTI’s Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board from 2002 to 2007, of the Prime Minister’s Council of Science and Technology from 2004 to 2007, and of the DTI’s Energy Advisory Panel from 1993 to 2003.
**Paddy Hoare,**
*Perdix Partnership*

Paddy grew up in the West Country milking Jersey cows during the school holidays, which led him to Royal Agricultural College and now he works as a land agent based in Lower Swell in the Cotswolds. Our office is at Fir Farm, Lower Swell and he oversees the farming enterprise which is now an integrated livestock and arable system, PFLA and in conversion to organic, selling as much produce from the farm gate and only using limited external inputs which they are striving to reduce to zero inputs and zero waste. Sustainability has to be the key for the successful future of farming and our environment, both of which must be in tune.

**Patrick Holden**
*Chief Executive of the Sustainable Food Trust*

Patrick Holden is the Founding Director and Chief Executive of the Sustainable Food Trust. After studying biodynamic agriculture at Emerson College, he established a mixed community farm in Wales in 1973, producing at various times: wheat for flour production sold locally, carrots and milk from an 85 cow Ayrshire dairy herd, now made into a single farm cheddar style cheese. He was the founding chairman of British Organic Farmers in 1982, before joining the Soil Association, where he worked for nearly 20 years and during which time the organisation led the development of organic standards and the market for organic foods. His advocacy for a major global transition to more sustainable food systems now entails international travel and regular broadcasts and talks at public events. Patrick is the Patron of the UK Biodynamic Association and was awarded the CBE for services to organic farming in 2005.
Bob Kennard
Sustainable Food Trust Policy Adviser
Agriculturalist with UK and International management and consultancy experience. In 1988 established organic meat and food company, Graig Farm Organics, and later a farmers’ marketing group supplying organic cattle and lambs to supermarkets. In 1999, with Richard Young, wrote report highlighting plight of smaller meat plants, and subsequently served on two MAFF committees, which changed system of charging for meat inspection, reducing charges to smaller abattoirs. Author ‘Much Ado About Mutton’ 2014. Bob joined the SFT as a policy adviser in 2017 and is co-author of ‘A Good Life and A Good Death: Re-localising farm animal slaughter’ with Richard Young.

Natasha Jenkins
Local Authority Environment Health Officer
Natasha is a part time MSc Agrifood Student and Local Authority Food Safety Enforcement Officer (Speaking in a personal capacity with the benefit of industry and enforcement experience of both EC approved and exempt meat producers including poultry slaughter)

Edward Parsons
Waddesdon Estate
Edward Parsons is Estate Manager at the Waddeson Estate, where he manages the Estate’s asset protection and sustainable enhancement. The Estate is a diverse Family run operation covering 6,600 acres of inhand farm and woodland, supplemented by let farms, a significant property portfolio, energy production, stud and a wide range of development projects including residential housing.

Will Parsons
Co-founder of the British Pilgrimage Trust
Will is co-founder of the British Pilgrimage Trust, and has been pioneering new directions for British pilgrimage since 2004. Author and Wandering Minstrel, he has taken British pilgrimage from Radio 4 to BBC 1 to Vogue Magazine.
Hylton Murray Philipson
The Blaston Estate

Hylton has had a lifelong commitment to sustainability, with particular emphasis on the Amazon rainforest and renewable energy. The Blaston Estate was an intensively farmed largely arable operation of 1,000 acres until 7 years ago when Hylton began to practice conservation agriculture with the condition of the soil at the centre. He has re-introduced rotational grassland, acquired a herd of 500 Highlander ewes and is building a herd of 200 pedigree Hereford cattle. Hylton is a director of Agrivert, the leading anaerobic digestion business, and Trustee of the Global Canopy Programme and of the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest Trust.

John Mettrick
Mettrick’s Butchers

John is a fifth generation butcher. He graduated from Leeds University with a B.Sc. in Botany and in his words ‘I left university to go and work in the family business for a year to say thank you to my parents and I am still here 30 years later’. When his dad retired John and his brother Steven took over the family business as joint Managing Directors. They run three retail outlets, a cutting plant, bakery and an abattoir. Over the years the business has won numerous accolades including the Meat Trades Journal Top Shop and the BBC Food and Farming awards Best Local Retailer. John is a past president of the NFMFT and is also the current President, the Vice Chair of the Q Guild of Butchers and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Butchers.
**Tim Morris**  
**Animal Health and Welfare Board for England**

Professor Tim Morris is a veterinary surgeon with a PhD in large animal reproduction. He spent 20 years in the pharmaceutical industry, gaining specialist qualifications in laboratory animal medicine in UK, Europe and the US, managing research facilities, and finally nationally and internationally in public affairs, media and interactions on animal use with investors, governments, welfare groups and commercial partners. He then spent 5 years as Director of Welfare and Science for British Horseracing, with veterinary, public affairs, media and welfare medication research roles. He is a non-executive member the UK Government’s Animal Health and Welfare Board for England and is a Special Professor in Laboratory Animal Welfare and Science at Nottingham University.

**Ben Pugh**  
**Founder of Farmdrop**

Ben Pugh started Farmdrop, the ethical grocery company, back in 2014. Ben spotted an opportunity for mobile technology to cut out the middlemen (supermarkets and wholesalers) from the food supply chain, and in doing so give a better deal both for farmers and customers. Farmdrop now delivers thousands of items of fresh food everyday from over 160 local-to-London producers. Ben is a former retail broker who has worked at Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan and PwC. He also worked on the IPO for Ocado back in 2010.

**Joel Salatin**  
**Polyface Farms**

Joel Salatin works alongside his wife Teresa, son Daniel, daughter Rachel, daughter-in-law Sheri, apprentices, interns, rental farmers, staff and animals to manage Polyface Farms in the Swoope region of Virginia, USA. Joel wows packed audiences of all walks of life wherever he goes with his version of what he calls ‘Agritainment’. Joel has been labelled ‘The World’s Most Innovative Farmer’ by Time Magazine and is the author of 8 books, countless articles, and has led seminars and courses with tens of thousands leaving changed in the way they eat, farm and live.
Andrew Sells
Chairman of Natural England

Andrew Sells was appointed Chairman of Natural England in January 2014. He also sits on the Defra Board. Andrew was previously Chairman of Wyevale Garden Centres and Linden Homes. He has held trustee roles with the Royal Horticultural Society and Policy Exchange. Andrew is a member of the National Trust, the Royal Horticultural Society, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

Robin Tuke
Hardiesmill

Robin and his wife farm a pedigree Aberdeen Angus herd on their 480 acre mixed farm in the Scottish Borders. They started selling beef in 1999, launched Hardiesmill in 2001, introduced seam-cutting into Scotland in 2006, bought Tombuie Smokehouse in 2007 and have had an in-house butchery since 2008. The herd have been grass-reared since 2003 and Hardiesmill have been recognised as producing some of Scotland’s best beef since 2009.

Kim Wilkie
Landscape Architect

Kim is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. Kim lectures in America and assists in national committees on landscape and environmental policy in the UK. Currently he is working on the grounds of the Natural History Museum in London and plans to combine landscape design with sustainable farming for future estates.

Joel Williams
Integrated Soils

Joel Williams is an independent soils consultant and educator and presents engaging lectures and workshops about integrated farming to primary producers around the world. He works with both conventional and organic producers and is encouraged by the soil health movement as a tool to bridge divides between production systems and facilitate a fruitful cross pollination toward innovative soil management.
Fir Farm

Fir Farm, a working 700 acre mixed farm, implementing sustainable practices and supplying local markets wherever possible in the Cotswolds, near Stow on the Wold. The farm is home to 200 head of pedigree polled Hereford cattle, 250 acres of arable and 90 acres of conservation area and woodland.

In Our Hands ‘In Our Hands’ Film Screening

In Our Hands is “the inspiring story behind the bloody, sweat and tears of the British farmers seizing the Brexit moment to outgrow the industrial food system”.

Food and farming is in crisis. In just over a decade we’ve lost more than 33,000 farms from our countryside, and alongside this, bad diet is now causing more health problems than smoking! The fundamental link between people, food and the very land we stand on is being broken. Yet it need not be this way.

There is a growing movement of farmers and food workers who are creating vibrant farms, living soils, thriving food markets and a fairer food system for all. At the heart of all change lies a story, and In Our Hands is the story of a new kind of farm, a new kind of food and a new kind of society. This film has been created as an open source tool in order to debunk the myth of the industrial food system, and be a resource for farmers and activists in building a better world.
The Sustainable Food Trust

The Sustainable Food Trust (SFT) is a small, UK based organisation, established in 2011, that works internationally to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food systems.

We believe that change can only take place when leaders and organisations are empowered to act through a combination of strong evidence and enabling policy, supported by pressure from informed public opinion. Accordingly, we focus our work in three areas:

Leadership and Collaboration: Influencing individuals and organisational leaders
Research and Policy: Enabling policy change based on sound science
Communications: Informing and empowering citizens as a voice for change

We are committed to facilitating a transition away from the current industrialised food model, to food systems which avoid damage to the environment, minimise depletion of natural resources, and promote public health, social justice and wellbeing.

We believe that our combination of knowledge and experience of practical agriculture, understanding of the need for systemic solutions to the problems caused by the current food system, track record in advocacy for sustainable agriculture and network of high level contacts throughout the world, leave us well placed to undertake this work.

The strategic priorities on which we are currently focusing include: improving the economic environment for sustainable food production; understanding the role of livestock in sustainable systems; reducing dependency on antibiotics, agricultural chemicals and GMOs in farming; promoting soil stewardship and supporting the development of new models for sustainable food systems which can be applied locally and at scale. To support this work, we aim to encourage and enable greater collaboration between the development, conservation, animal welfare and sustainable food movements, and engage with food businesses and policymakers.
Make sure to follow and tweet us your thoughts from the event using the conference hashtag

#FirFarm2018

SusFoodTrust

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Keep up to date with all of the latest news from the SFT by signing up to our weekly newsletter at www.sustainablefoodtrust.org