

CASE STUDY

Oxford Farming Conference 2011

In partnership with
Syngenta and Volac

EXPERT OUTCOME

Background

Oxford Farming Conference commissioned England Marketing to carry out research to provide an insight into the key issues affecting the farming industry. One of the key themes of 2011 conference was to debate the competitiveness and viability of UK farming in relation to the other major world agricultural economies and to highlight the challenges and areas of opportunity. To inform the debate throughout the conference, research was carried out to gather the views of agricultural leaders, specialists and farmers on a range of issues. The research was sponsored jointly with crop protection company, Syngenta and dairy nutrition company, Volac. As one of the few agencies with experience of undertaking research throughout the food supply chain, England Marketing was able to gain the opinions of farmers and growers through to retailers and consumers.

Methodology

Leading figures in UK agriculture were contacted by England Marketing and their views gathered on a number of issues affecting UK agriculture over the next decade.



THE OXFORD FARMING
CONFERENCE
inform - challenge - inspire



Industry experts gave their opinions of agriculture in general and across the following sectors; cereals, proteins & oilseeds, fruit & vegetables, dairy, beef & lamb and pig & poultry. In some cases, respondents chose to self-complete the questionnaire but most used the opportunity to engage in an in-depth telephone discussion.

Outcomes

The majority of respondents felt the agricultural sector is of huge importance to the UK's economy and that this importance will increase over the next 10 years due to a growing population and the need for food security. Respondents felt that the UK Government understands and supports agriculture to a lesser extent than governments in competitor countries largely because other countries employ more people in agriculture and are closer to food production. Interestingly, three quarters of those interviewed felt that not enough young people are choosing careers in agriculture and that it is not an attractive career option. However, careers in the arable sectors seem to offer more opportunity than those in the livestock sectors. It was widely believed that consumers have a good deal of influence on what is grown and produced in the UK but the retailers have greater influence. It was widely recognised that consumers had lost touch with how their food is produced but over the last few years there has been a revival of interest in provenance and ethical issues. This research highlights that there is an overwhelming need to develop joined up agricultural strategies, particularly between the Government and the supply chain, to offer a truly collaborative approach.

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This year's Oxford Farming Conference research has provided a fascinating insight into the key issues affecting our industry.

**Cedric Porter, lead
research director of
the Oxford Farming
Conference**

I would encourage you all to take the results of the Oxford Farming Conference research as a catalyst for leadership and for change.

**Andy Richardson,
Corporate
Communications Manager,
Volac**

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