

The National Trust Invites Public To Choose Sheep For Farm Experiment



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The National Trust has revealed that members of the public will decide which flock of sheep will be bought by a working, commercial farm as part of the MyFarm* experiment which aims to re-connect people with the day-to-day realities of farming.

Under the banner 'You choose the Ewes', subscribers signed up for the experiment will be asked to choose between buying 100 commercial or rare breed sheep**, to expand the current flock.

They will be asked to consider the financial consequences, the implications for rare-breed bloodline and environmental impacts, as well as lambing rates and the time taken to rear lambs for market.

Once this decision is taken, the MyFarm community will decide on the specific breed of sheep to stock.

Last month, MyFarm Farmers decided to plant wheat on a 27 acre (15.4 hectare) field as part of the experiment being run by the National Trust at [Home Farm on the Wimpole Estate](#) in Cambridgeshire.

The charity aims to connect up to 10,000 people with farming and to better understand where their food comes from, to understand land management and the wider issues facing farmers today.

MyFarm farm manager Richard Morris said: "We're basically saying to members 'you choose the ewes'. Currently we have 250 rare breed ewes, 200 rare breed mature lambs and 300 lambs which were born this spring at Wimpole, and we now have the opportunity to increase numbers.

"Rare breeds offer continuity for our conservation work, but there is possibly a more efficient utilisation of forage and greater financial return from using more commercial breeds.

"The arguments both for and against rare breed and commercial are fascinating and I look forward to seeing how the debate unfolds over the next six days."

Other people will be contributing to the discussions surrounding the vote including the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) and a professional chef.

The results of the poll will be posted on the MyFarm website.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

* The MyFarm experiment launched on 4 May 2011. Based at the National Trust's own working farm, Wimpole Home Farm in Cambridgeshire, farm manager Richard Morris will set monthly options for subscribers, who will debate and vote on one major [farming](#) issue each month around crops, livestock and wider impacts.

** The rare breed sheep at Wimpole are: Portlands, Manx Loagthans, Hebrideans, Whitefaced Woodlands and Norfolk Horns. These varieties have been bred at Wimpole for the past 30 years.

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.

The National Trust offers a number of places to [visit in the UK](#), including the [National Trust farm](#).

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