

The National Trust Reveals Consumers Need A Leg Up With Farming Knowledge



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The National Trust has revealed the results from a new survey* which show that the vast majority (93 per cent) of people in Great Britain don't know the best time of year to enjoy eating British lamb.

Only seven per cent of respondents correctly identified autumn as the time for tucking into one of Britain's favourites, with half (49 per cent) choosing spring as the best time to serve lamb - the time of year when most lambs are born.

The research marks six months of the National Trust's mass on-line **MyFarm** experiment at its 1,200 acre **organic farm** at Wimpole in Cambridgeshire.

The innovative project aims to involve people in farming and where their food comes from by enabling them to make decisions on a real working farm.

An online straw poll of the MyFarm community revealed that 19 per cent knew the best time of year to enjoy lamb - more than double the outcome of the wider non-subscriber survey - suggesting the experiment is making useful progress.

Richard Morris, the National Trust's Farm Manager at Wimpole, said: "Eating lamb when it's in season ensures consumers can enjoy the meat at its best.

"Lambs born in the spring feed outside on grass throughout the summer resulting in really flavoursome and tender meat.

"The lamb we see on our supermarket shelves in the spring is either shipped in from abroad, or has been barn-reared out of season without the benefit of maturing and developing naturally on grass."

Other results highlighted consumer confusion over hogget (a mature lamb between one and two years old) with only 16 per cent of respondents aware that hogget is meat from sheep.

It also revealed only 40 per cent of Britons buy British lamb with 21 per cent buying its New Zealand relation and 16 per cent just indiscriminately selecting whatever is on the supermarket shelves.

By contrast, 51 per cent of MyFarm subscribers could identify hogget - three times as many as the wider survey - and 63 per cent bought British lamb.

Richard Morris added: "[The National Trust](#) is 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 and we see it as our role to re-connect people with farming and to encourage them to care more about where their food comes from.

"We can do this via experiments such as MyFarm which lift the lid on the realities of farming in the 21st Century."

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Notes to Editors:

* The survey was carried out by TNS Omnibus in November 2011. Total sample size was 1270 meat eating adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3-10 November. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 16-64).

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 4 million members, 62,000 volunteers and visitors to think and learn about food. The National Trust has created 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. Find out more at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/food.

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