

**Press Release**

[01 June 2023]

**Oxford 2024 will debate the power of diversity, in all its aspects**

The 2024 Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) will be exploring the *Power of Diversity* in all its guises within the agrifood sector and wider rural economy. People, crop rotations, species genetics, food and farming systems, nations, politics and business structures.

The 2024 Conference Chair will be Will Evans, who is a huge advocate for the importance of diversity, as well as for the conference itself.

He said: “The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) has always been, and always will be a force for good in the farming industry and community. It brings together people from all corners of the agricultural, rural and food sectors, encourages a hugely diverse range of thinking, and generates ideas and positive solutions for the future.

“The Conference demonstrates true strength in connecting food and farming through its speakers and audience. It did not shy away from the difficult discussions and debates, challenged all of us, and offered a unique platform where all opinions could be shared, so individuals could make their own informed decisions.

“Yes, the industry is facing significant challenges at the current time, which OFC will continue to face head on – furthering conversations about labour, supply chains, alternative income streams, innovation, attracting new people to our industry, and many more issues. OFC does this really, really well. Sparked by honest conversations with passionate people across all sectors of the industry, those who attend Oxford in 2024 will hear the very best of diversity in all its forms.”

He added that the theme for the 2024 Conference reflects his own background, his family, and, in a moment of clarity whilst cultivating a field on his tractor, the Power of Diversity theme was borne.

“I am proud to be a tenth-generation farmer, husband and father to four daughters. I truly believe we have so much to celebrate and share around the theme of diversity – our huge range of entrepreneurial farming businesses which have done so much to shape our historic landscape, our many native livestock breeds, our world-leading agricultural scientists, our precious environment that all of us are so focused on improving, and some of the safest and highest quality food produced anywhere in the world, to name just a few. But most of all, it’s the incredible people in farming that make it such a special industry to be a part of, and this is what we want to celebrate at OFC24.”

Will said that he attended the conference for the first time nearly six years ago as part of the Emerging Leaders Programme (now called Inspire); “I wasn’t at all sure what to expect. I was surprised and delighted at how welcoming the conference was and amazed to find such a wide variety of people from so many different backgrounds in attendance.

“OFC is steeped in a long and proud history going all the way back to 1936 and has a strong reputation as one of the UK’s leading agricultural events. All of the elements I experienced are why it continues to be so widely renowned worldwide, and why I am extremely proud to be one of the Voluntary Directors, and this year, your 2024 OFC Chair.”

The other OFC Directors are Abi Kay, Ali Capper, Julia Latto, Jud McCann, Navaratnam Partheeban (Theeb), Christopher Price, Geoff Sansome and Ben Taylor Davies.

To find out more about OFC 2024, taking place from 3 to 5 January 2024, visit [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk).

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**Notes to Editors:**

For more information on the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC):

**Website:** [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk/)

**Twitter:**[@oxfordfarming](http://www.twitter.com/oxfordfarming)

**YouTube:** [OxfordFarmingConference](https://www.youtube.com/oxfordfarmingconference)

The [Council](https://www.ofc.org.uk/council) is made up of 10 voluntary directors. The OFC 2024 Chair is Will Evans.

OFC is held annually in January over three days and includes a vibrant programme of speakers, panel sessions, politics sessions and easy networking.  The 78th conference will take place from the 3 to 5 January 2024 in Oxford and online.

OFC has established a reputation for strong debate and exceptional speakers. OFC is a charity that invests in the agricultural education and knowledge-sharing. It attracts over 650 delegates every year, including many people from the wider food chain, retail, NGOs, scientific organisations, media, policy-making bodies and governments from around the world.

With HRH Princess Royal as its patron, OFC is a charity with a remit to educate and transfer knowledge in the agricultural sector. As part of its charitable undertakings, the OFC sponsors young people to attend the conference, to travel overseas and it seeks to develop emerging leaders.