

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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**Oxford Farming Conference reveals speakers for OFC26**

The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) has announced the speaker line-up for its 2026 conference, taking place from 7 to 9 January, with the theme ‘Growing Resilience’. Opening and closing the programme will be global food systems expert **Jack Bobo** and conservation champion **Dame Fiona Reynolds**, who will be joined by more than 25 speakers from across the world as OFC celebrates its 90th anniversary.

**Jack Bobo** is Executive Director of the Rothman Family Institute for Food Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He previously led the Food Systems Institute at the University of Nottingham and has also served as Director of Global Food and Water Policy at The Nature Conservancy, CEO of Futurity, and a senior advisor on food policy at the U.S. Department of State. A recognised expert on global food systems, Jack has delivered more than 500 keynote speeches in 50 countries and is the author of ‘Why Smart People Make Bad Food Choices’.

**Dame Fiona Reynolds** has been at the forefront of conservation and countryside policy for more than three decades. A former Director-General of the National Trust and later Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, she now chairs the National Audit Office, the Council of the Royal Agricultural University, the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, while also serving as a trustee of the Grosvenor Estate**.**

Other keynote speakers will include **Laura Lukasik**, President of Numen Bio and Co-Founder of the Rural Women’s Network. Globally recognised for founding Latin America’s first agtech start-up in agricultural risk management, she is a former corporate leader and farmer advocate who now co-develops regenerative portfolios with farmers across Latin America and Africa, building ecosystems that restore natural balance, generate lasting wealth and unlock market value.

From the Netherlands, **Douwe Korting** brings experience in international land and water management and agricultural journalism. He co-founded the pioneering Herenboeren cooperative farm, which has since inspired a growing movement of community-driven food systems across Europe.

Closer to home, **Mike Rivington**, Senior Scientist at the James Hutton Institute, leads research into how climate change will reshape land use, natural capital and ecosystem services. Using advanced climate modelling and land capability mapping, his work helps governments and land managers visualise and plan for the future of farming.

**Gail Soutar** is Head of Trade and Business Strategy at the National Farmers’ Union (NFU). Raised on her family’s croft in the north of Scotland and with over 20 years’ experience in UK, EU and international agricultural policy, she leads the NFU’s work on trade, taxation, infrastructure, skills and innovation.

**Sivalingam Vasanthakumar (Kumar)** is a Somerset farmer and chef, raised on a dairy farm in Sri Lanka before studying sustainable agriculture in the UK. He is the founder of Kumar’s Dosa Bar, a celebrated South Indian street food business. After initially combining the enterprise with sheep farming, in 2019 he made the decision to transition to grow fresh produce on his farm to supply the Dosa Bar.

**Stuart Armitage** manages The Warriner School Farm in Oxfordshire, one of the largest school farms in the UK. With over 15 years’ experience in the animal industry, he oversees the farm as both a business and an educational resource, providing opportunities for students who struggle in conventional classrooms to thrive through agriculture.

**Lucy Jenner** is a PhD researcher at the University of Edinburgh, focusing on land use and environmental science. She also works as Head of Natural Capital Consultancy at Savills, supporting landowners to explore how changes in land management can deliver both environmental and economic benefits

Chair of OFC26, Jude McCann, said: “Marking 90 years gives us the chance to reflect on how farming has adapted over generations, but also to recognise the risks and uncertainties we now face. ‘Growing Resilience’ is about how people, businesses and the environment can withstand future shocks while adapting to new opportunities.

“This year’s line-up brings together leading voices from farming, science, policy, academia and industry, with sessions designed to challenge assumptions and explore what resilience will demand of agriculture in the decades ahead.”

As in previous years, the programme will feature more than keynote addresses. The renowned Oxford Union Debate will return, as will the ever-popular politics session, ensuring lively and thought-provoking discussion across the three days. Also returning for 2026 will be the OFC report, which will focus on agriculture’s future opportunities

To celebrate the launch of the speaker programme, OFC has also announced the return of its bursary scheme for the fourth year, generously supported by the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust. The scheme will enable individuals who may otherwise face financial barriers to attend OFC26.

Bursaries include a full delegate ticket, accommodation, entry to the Chair’s Reception and Christ Church Dinner, with travel support available on request. Applicants must be UK residents, aged 18 or over who have not previously attended OFC and who face social or economic barriers to participation.

Tickets for the 2026 conference are already on sale. To view the full speaker list, apply for a bursary place or book your ticket, visit [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk).

**Press enquiries**

For more information or to arrange an interview contact marketing@ofc.org.uk

**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 OFC is one of the only external events to be allowed to host a debate in the Oxford Union. It has a long and proud history going back to 1936 and a strong reputation as one of the UK’s leading agricultural events. It always takes place in Oxford in the first week of January and is based at the Oxford Examination Schools. It offers a vibrant programme of speakers, panel and politics sessions as well as networking.
* OFC is a charity that invests in 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.
* HRH Princess Royal is patron of the OFC.
* OFC 2026 will take place from 7th - 9th January 2026 and will mark 90 years since the launch of the charity.
* The OFC 2026 Chair is Jude McCann and will be themed “Growing Resilience”