

## Booths Trust Farexchange for secure supply of quality British Beef

A major supermarket chain is marketing a unique brand of quality Yorkshire beef after the Farexchange Programme helped put a supply chain in place between the region's farmers and the high street retailer.

Beef into Booths is an exciting initiative by the supermarket and the National Trust to provide shoppers with choice cuts of meat from traditional beef animals through Booths' network of stores in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire.

Booths' aim is to sell meat from cattle reared in the northern counties. To be eligible for the scheme the animals must be sired by a traditional breed bull such as the Hereford or Angus, be born and bred on a National Trust holding and the farm must be Freedom Foods assured.

Farexchange developed the scheme's parameters and pricing structure in conjunction with the National Trust and Booths, so that a premium price is paid for eligible cattle over and above the market average and farmers are rewarded for the quality of the animals supplied.

One shortcoming quickly identified was that some of the land on National Trust farms in Cumbria does not grow sufficient feed for the animals and a significant proportion required further finishing – unlike in Yorkshire's lowland areas which are ideal for finishing cattle for slaughter.

Farexchange addressed the issue by carrying out a review of National Trust tenants on estates in Yorkshire to identify farmers with the potential to finish the animals. Andrew Leeming who farms Bay Tree Farm, adjacent to the National Trust's Fountains Abbey in Ripon, was one



of a number of farmers deemed suitable for the task and is now finishing cattle from Cumbria for slaughter.

The North Yorkshire farm has a herd of mainly Hereford Cross cows and has the capacity to take on more animals to utilise grassland and buildings on the farm. Animals are finished entirely on produce grown at the farm making them 100 percent self sufficient in feed.

Mr Leeming said: "This transfer has secured animals for the Booths scheme which otherwise would have been sold on the open market. I now have 40 traditionally bred cattle that I know where they have been reared, which is important to me from a bio security view point. I am looking forward to seeing the cattle grow over the coming months and working with Booths in the future."

The long-term aim of the initiative is to develop a producer-supplier group which can manage its own relationship directly with Booths and establish a network of finishing units to benefit store cattle producers unable to finish effectively themselves.

"Farexchange has helped us to develop this opportunity unique to National Trust Farmers in the area and it is good to see the supply of cattle continue to grow as more farmers become aware of the scheme."

**Nigel Cokell -**  
Booths red meat buyer

# Farexchange showing farmers the route to success

Encouraging Yorkshire and Humber farmers to develop their business skills so that they can secure better returns was behind the latest food supply chain initiative supported by the Farexchange Programme.

Farexchange partner the Yorkshire Agricultural Society (YAS) recently staged a 2 day Food Chain Excellence course. Its aim was to galvanise farm businesses into forging closer links with their customers to gain a greater competitive edge – and from the reaction of delegates, it looks to have had the desired impact.

Farmers from all over the region attended the two-day event at the YAS's new Regional Agricultural Centre at the Great Yorkshire Showground in Harrogate, where topics covered ranged from food supply chain issues to branding and meeting consumer needs.

Key industry figures from both the wholesale and retail markets gave in-depth presentations, including English Farming and Food Partnerships (EFFP) Business Development Director Mike Ader, Ian King of Kings Catering and Waitrose Agriculture Manager Duncan Sinclair, who gave an enlightening talk on boosting business performance.

Organic farmer Caroline Sellers, who runs Carr House Farm and its award-winning Side Oven Bakery in Driffield with husband Tim, said the course was a “real eye-opener” and had been invaluable in providing her with fresh ideas for taking the business forward.

YAS's regional programme director George Hamilton said: “The Food Chain programme is the first project that YAS has delivered for Farexchange. I am very keen to encourage farmers as food producers to develop closer links with their markets and customers. As a result of the success of this programme, we intend to run another later in the year.”

YAS, which is also responsible for putting on the Great Yorkshire Show, has strong links to both farmers and the food industry. It has been a partner of Farexchange since the programme was set up by Yorkshire Forward to address food supply chain security over two years ago.

If you are a farmer and interested in attending in the next course please contact us to register your interest.

“As a result of the Food Chain Excellence course we are now actively looking at making the packaging of our muesli products more attractive and we are also collaborating with others on potential new products next year. The course proved quite a wake-up call and has given us plenty of food for thought on how to improve our margins.”

**Caroline Sellers**  
- Side Oven Bakery



# Travel to Learn- The Beef Supply Chain in the Republic of Ireland

With increasing costs of production and tighter margins combined with increasing emphasis on consistent products, it is imperative farmers have a full understanding of the beef supply chain. Looking at new research methods that can be transposed on farms to improve efficiency and cut costs is of increasing importance not only to viability and sustainability of the domestic beef supply but also to help to meet our climate change obligations.

EBLEX, in conjunction with Dunbia, organised a two day trip to Southern Ireland for a group of 8 Yorkshire Farmers to help them gain an insight into the Irish beef finishing sector. Understanding current research on finishing beef, including rations, housing methods and genetics was a particular focus of the trip, but to gain a rounded understanding of their industry visits were also made to commercial beef units, marketing and processing facilities.

The first stop was a visit to Carnaross Livestock Market, Co. Meath, where the group was met by the Mart Manager, John Tevlen, John gave a run down of the market activity including throughputs of stock and an overview of the general trading patterns. There was an opportunity for the group to view the ongoing sales and talk to various buyers about the trade in general but also specifically about the type of stock required for various outlets.

Dunbia (Slane), Navan, Co. Meath, was the next stop. The group were able to gain a greater understanding of Visual Image Analysis (VIA) as a carcass classification method. The potential to use technology to not only classify carcasses but to predict lean meat yield and even meat quality is vast, however, its use is still in relatively early stages. Along with Dunbia plant staff, Pat Kearns from the Department of Agriculture, were on hand to explain how the system works and to answer the groups questions. In addition the group were able to view clipping of cattle on the kill line, the issue of dirty stock and the risk of contaminated meat is a pertinent issue.



Residual Feed Intake trial taking place at The Grange

A visit to the renowned Teagasc Grange Beef Research Centre and Animal Bio-Science Centre, Dunsany, Co. Meath was the final visit of day one. The Grange was established in 1959 and has since led national research programmes in all aspects of cattle production. The centre has played a vital role within the Irish beef industry, with the benefits clearly shown in the increased productivity on Irish farms. Of particular interest was an insight to their research on using slats in cattle housing, residual feed intake trials work, working with woodchip corrals and an overview of their Suckler Demonstration Farm.

Discussion carried on into the evening with various Dunbia staff joining the group for an evening meal to offer further insight into their processing business.

Day two included a visit to Richard Bourns commercial beef unit in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Richard gave an account of his production system and gave the group an overview of his unit. The farm has housing for 600 head of cattle, making the enterprise one of Dunbia's largest suppliers. Cattle are all fed on a TMR system with most of the forage grown on the farm. Much improvement has taken place on the unit to improve not only grassland but also to enhance the infrastructure of the unit.

Over lunch, the final meeting of the visit was with Joe Healy of the Irish Independent Farming section where a general discussion on the Irish and English beef production systems was held, allowing both groups a greater insight into the respective similarities and differences.

The visit enabled participants to see the types and results of research taking place at The Grange and being put in to practice on a commercial unit. It is hoped the group will not only have a greater understanding of the beef supply chain, but will be able to make use of this information to implement changes within their own beef systems.

"The trip gave me a valuable insight to the Irish beef industry. The market and abattoir visits clearly reinforced the need for a consistent product falling within specification, with the mechanical grading an option that could perhaps be developed to assess saleable meat yield. The Grange was an eye opening experience and some of the messages emerging from their current research, such as their work on Residual Feed Intake and their Suckler Demonstration Unit, will be implemented within our farming system with the aim of increasing efficiency to improve farm profitability."

Mike Powley – Beef Farmer

# Customer First

Farexchange is proud to announce that it has been successful in passing the Customer First ® National Standard for Customer Service. The assessment process for the standard has helped develop our focus on three key areas; building customer relationships, maximising market awareness and developing our people. The achievement of this standard shows the Farexchange Programmes dedication to providing excellent customer service and improving customer relationships.

## Food 2030

The Yorkshire and Humber region is already leading the field on food security following Defra's recent Food 2030 report. Around 40 percent of the nation's food is currently sourced overseas and traditional supplies are under pressure due to a rocketing global population. It is estimated that by 2030 the world will need to produce 50 percent more food - with potentially twice as much as that by 2050 - all of this using lower volumes of water, less energy and fewer fertilisers.

Due to its diverse and productive agricultural sector, Yorkshire and Humber is one of the largest food producing areas of the country and has a strong food processing and manufacturing base.

Collaboration from farm to fork can address many of the challenges outlined in Food 2030 – one being the move towards a low carbon economy. Steve Cann Farexchange Programme Director believes the rest of the country needs to follow in Yorkshire and Humber's footsteps if the goal of sustainable and secure food supplies is to be realised. He said: "Retailers, manufacturers and farmers working more closely together in secure supply chains cuts costs, reduces waste and can improve profit margins – all key ingredients if we are to successfully manage the growing demand for food over the next 20 years." To read the Food 2030 report visit the Farexchange website [www.farexchange.yorkshire.co.uk](http://www.farexchange.yorkshire.co.uk)

## Farexchange Team How do I find out more?

If you would like to discuss your needs further with the Farexchange team, contact us via email or telephone. So we can help your business, please provide us with details of your query, or any other details you think will help us understand your situation better. We will then contact you shortly.

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