

ORFC more relevant than ever in 2018

Tickets are now on sale for the much-loved Oxford Real Farming Conference (ORFC), now in its ninth year.

Taking place on 4-5 January 2017 in the Oxford Town Hall, the ORFC welcomes practising mud-on-the-boots farmers and growers, with scientists and economists, activists and lawyers, and everyone else with a serious interest in working towards a more sustainable food and agricultural system.

As well as showcasing new techniques for best practice in agroecological farming, there will be broader discussions on what must happen to create real, worthwhile change in our food system.

The conference themes are split across four strands: *Farm Practice*; *Growing and Supporting*; *Food Sovereignty* and *The Big Ideas*. This year, the ORFC will also have a room dedicated to the complexity of Brexit and how it will impact UK farming and trade.

Conference Manager Nessie Reid said: “We are delighted to announce the ORFC 2018 programme – packed with practical farming know how and debate ranging from Brexit to systems change to wildlife friendly farming. Industrial agriculture is one of the largest contributors to biodiversity loss and climate change. There has never been a more important time in the history of humanity to implement farming systems that not only provide us with fresh, clean food, but which also support soil health, our water and the biosphere. I believe the ORFC is a collective beacon of optimism for envisioning and working towards a bright food and farming future.”

This unique gathering of the UK's sustainable and organic food and farming movements offers a practical mix of on-farm advice, showcasing new techniques for best practice in agroecological farming, and discusses the global food system, including economic and trade policies that affect British farming, and more.

Equally important are the real-farm experiences and knowledge-sharing sessions that encourage practising farmers and new entrants to consider fresh approaches to long-term problems.

Nessie added: “The ORFC is widely regarded as a powerful platform for discussing and determining the type of agricultural policies we – as civil society at large – should be calling for. There really is nothing else like it in the farming calendar.”

The conference will showcase a diverse range of experience and innovation. People putting new models of farming into practice, alongside those who have been farming for some time, as well as providing a unique opportunity to connect with new, young and emerging farmers; from those taking over the family farm, to those working in unusual urban spaces.

The ORFC would like to thank the following the following funders, sponsors and partner organisations, without whose support this event would not be possible: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Riverford, Compassion in World Farming, the Soil Association, Landworkers Alliance, the Pasture-Fed Livestock Association, Sustain and Cotswold Seeds.

-ENDS-

For more information and interviewees, please contact:

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Conference quick links:

- Access the full programme here:
- More info on evening activities here:
- Our blog archive, containing opinion pieces on issues from agroforestry and flooding, to Brexit and glyphosate: <http://orfc.org.uk/blog/>
- Our twitter account: <https://twitter.com/ORFC> and conference hashtag: **#ORFC18**

For conference enquiries please contact: nessie@orfc.org.uk

About the Oxford Real Farming Conference (www.orfc.org.uk):

In 2009, agricultural writer Graham Harvey (now of Pasture Promise TV) invited Colin Tudge and Ruth West (founders of the Campaign for Real Farming) to help establish a new kind of farming conference. The conference, first held in 2010 as a much-needed alternative to the concurrently-running Oxford Farming Conference, provides an innovative environment for some radical discussions on some of the biggest issues facing our society today. ORFC delegates are those from across food and farming, with an interest in new agricultural models. They represent those who are interested in meeting global food system challenges in original, environmentally sustainable ways. The point of the ORFC is not simply to attack the status quo but to look ahead — to ask what the world really needs, and what really can be done.