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The Aylsham Agricultural Show Association Limited

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Registration Number: 02106677 Registered Charity Number: 298673

## **Aylsham Show 2025**

### **Learn from The Land Area Zone Report**

***Report written August 2025***

**Education Co-Ordinator:** Emily Harrod

**Education Committee:** Clare Buxton, Kristopher Harper-Allison, Frances Robeson

#### **Overview of Learn from the Land Area**

At the heart of the Aylsham show are the core values of educating people on food, farming, the countryside and the environment. This is the pivotal role of the Education area, creating a vibrant space where the public can learn about agriculture, where their food comes from and the environment that surrounds us.

A notable changes this year was the change of title for the area- previously the name encompassed the objectives of the area however was not concise and memorable, so the switch to Learn from The Land Area (LFTLA) was decided going forwards.

The Learn from the Land was located near the agricultural area of the showground, surrounded by not just picturesque scenery but also key companies from local the agricultural machinery sector. The Food Market area was also re-located to be in close proximity to the LFTLA, which worked well in regard to footfall and being relative to our area's goals.

#### **Pre-Show Activities**

It had been decided previously that each year it was important to identify a theme for the area to follow, to help link everyone in and tell a story to the public. In 2024 we had tried 'Careers in Agriculture' which proved difficult for some organisations to align to. So for 2025 the theme of potatoes was decided- a prominent crop within Norfolk. Going forward a different crop will be chosen for each year.

The organisation of the Learn from The Land area is steered by the Education Committee who aim to meet on a monthly basis to ensure we are moving forwards with plans, as well as staying in regular contact with local organisations (those attending and future potential attendees).

An area we have not been able to engage with as well as we would have liked is local schools, with the show being on a bank holiday and in the school holidays. Progress is being made as in June, we attended the Aylsham High School Families Open day, where we hosted a stand that provided activities related to the this year's potato them for the show, as well as highlighting the show to an audience that were not so aware of the occasion. It proved a worthwhile event to be part of, forging future links with organisations such as National Trust and Norfolk Libraries. Aylsham High and Reepham High School also provided displays for the day, illustrating potato facts and the work the schools are doing with Papillion Project.

In early July, we hosted a 'Meet and Greet' session to invite key stakeholders in the area to discuss what their plans were to support the aims of the area and encourage them to be innovative with their displays. Overall, the session was successful, by enabling us to identify areas that needed further work and forge links between the organisations present. This is something we look to replicate for future shows.

In September 2025 we are also looking to have stand at an event organised by the National Trust in Aldeburgh. We look to continue to engage with such events in the lead up to the 2026 show, with talks in place with Gresham's to be part of the annual conference in January.

### Show Day Overview

The Learn from the Land area was adjusted from last year- all organisations attending were asked to bring their own marquee/gazebos rather than be situated with the area's main marquee. This allowed for full visibility of those in attendance and any activities they had on offer. This freed up the show provided marquee to be utilised for demonstrations and talks. The area also hosted the Sheep show and a picnic area.

#### **Exhibitors present:**

- Norfolk Young Farmers- interactive displays showcasing their local clubs, with members of the organisation present to engage the public.
- FFDT Mobile Classroom – manned throughout the day, with a 'potato bunting' activity that involved colouring of potatoes that were cut out and hung up along rope to create bunting.

- Norfolk Wildlife Trust – a vital organisation in the Norfolk Countryside, promoting the work they do in the area as well as providing activities that were educational, focussing on the life cycles of wildlife within our local habitats.
- Compassion in World Farming – highlighting the importance of animal welfare on farms.
- The Papillion Project – local volunteer organisation that focusses on engaging young people in the environment and sustainability. Their exhibit looked at the work they do in local schools as well as the growing of potatoes.
- Sheep Show – shearing, breed and information-based entertainment that is popular with all ages.
- Easton, Paston and City College – as well as promoting courses, each of the areas had a potato theme, including making electricity from potatoes and making felt potato figures. The main centrepiece of the marquee was a crop spraying drone.
- NORMAC (Norfolk Farm Machinery Club) Aylsham Branch- the organisation linked in with Solana Seeds to produce a stand that focussed on variety development of potatoes, including a tractor with trial planter to illustrate how this is carried out.
- Kettle Crisps- a prominent local company, who had aimed to do a crisp flavour development activity. The popularity of their brand helped to draw people in.
- Bucket List- helping to link in the process of growing potatoes to the final product, with free samples on offer.
- The Demonstration/Talk Marquee hosted:
  - Suzanne Arnold, StoryTeller – Suzanne specialises in tales of the land and environment for young people, and is able to tailor her stories to the theme of the area.
  - Talk by Chris Page (ITV Anglia Weather) – with weather forecasting playing a key role in farming and the environment, Chris not only detailed the methods used to determine the weather and its importance in potato growing, but also his career path.
  - Cooking Demonstration by Dave Patterson, Lead Lecturer at Easton College on how to make the perfect mash, including audience participation.
  - Sabine Virani from Sustainable Food Norwich done a demonstration on how our soils are like sponges and need to be healthy in order to function correctly.

## Future Plans

We feel the area had its most successful year yet in regard to level of engagement and footfall in the area. Attributes to this include the revised layout as well as popular brands present.

As ever, there are improvements to be made- the talk/demo marquee was an improvement on last year, however there were occasions it was challenging to get the audience numbers. Once a few sat down that often encouraged others. Ways round this could be to revise the area, and/or review how it is publicised. Was the programme attractive enough?

The Education Committee will need to continue to engage with a wide range of organisations over the next year to keep the vibrance in the area. Ones to be reviewed include CIWF, and we have used Chris Page for a couple of years now so feel it is time to look at approaching someone else (either an

influencer or local figure). Linking the story between the organisations is improving, however could still be better.

### **Action and Ideas For the 2026 Show**

- Continue with all organisations attending to bring their own gazebos.
- Revise the demonstration/talk marque- would a series of smaller marquees be ideal, or scrap the talks and just have games/activities inside?
- Meet with Aylsham Show's marketing co-ordinator early in the year to determine how we can improve engagement with our audience in the lead up to the show better.
- Now the Food Market area is located next to us, is it possible to engage with them more?
- Continue to increase engagement with local schools- attending events, creating projects etc
- Utilise the Farm Business Competition within the area better- videos, talks etc.

### **Images**

Please see below link to album of photos from the day. Please note majority of the photos were taken by FFDT:

<https://myalbum.com/album/gVoY2M63BHq5GR/?invite=2b9c4cfe-4799-4245-87b4-cd613a72f88a>

### **Acknowledgements**

The Aylsham Show, and in particular the Education committee, would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to The Morley Agricultural Foundation (TMAF) for the support that they continue to provide us to be able to organise and progress the Learn from the Land Area at the show. As the sector is in an increasingly turbulent time, it is more important to either to educate the public on the journey of their food and about their surroundings- TMAF's support enables us to aim to achieve this.

### **Feedback**

*Received as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025*

"Well done for yesterday it seem like a real triumph! I enjoyed my cooking demo session too and it was nice to see a crowd in the tent.

Hope my talk went down well, I had a number of questions afterwards so that is always good."

**Chris Page, Meteorologist, Broadcaster and Presenter**

"I hope you had a well-earned rest. You put such a lot of work into the event. I really liked the layout this year it was much more accessible and welcoming than last year and the variety of speakers was great.

I love your invitation for us to have a coffee and will leave it to you to contact me when you are ready for a meet-up.

I was thinking about your suggestion for the theme next year, and you said sugar beet. I know it needs to be something that farmers grow commercially, but wouldn't it be fun to do Manglewurzels. I'm going to try growing some next year! See photo below!! Now there's inspiration and sounds tasty too!!"

***Suzanne Arnold, Storyteller***

"Just wanted to say a huge thank you for having us in the discovery zone this year.

We had great engagement from everyone from little children to the older generation- was such a lovely set up and I believe the lay out worked really well.

Thank you once again"

***Alice Saunders and Poppy Bunting, Norfolk YFC Chairpersons***

"Thanks for your help co-ordinating the education area yesterday. As we briefly discussed, the day was really useful from our perspective, despite not having many children trying our activity. A couple of thoughts which I hope are useful:

- Being dwarfed by the young farmers great gazebo wasn't ideal, but appreciate it can be difficult to squeeze everyone in.
- I may not have read the detail somewhere, but it would have been useful to know the age group of the children we were aiming at for the STEM activity. I think our water and carbon activity was for children older than the target age group!
- Next year, can exhibitors give short educational talks about their work? Although it may not be directly relevant to the themed crop.
- More shade? Perhaps having parasols on the benches could have encouraged parents and children to stay and do the activities?

Sign us up for next year! - Let me know the date once you have it, and I'll get it in our events calendar."

***Jordan Sharman, General Manager at Norfolk Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group***